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The Claverings.

CHAPTER IV.

FLORENCE BURTON.



It was now Christmas time at Stratton, or rather Christmas time was near at hand ; not the Christmas next after the autumn of Lord Ongar's marriage, but the following Christmas, and Harry Clavering had finished his studies in Mr. Burton's office. He flattered himself that he had not been idle while he was there, and was now about to commence his more advanced stage of pupilage, under the great Mr. Beilby in London, with hopes which were still good, if they were not so magnificent as they once had been. When he first saw Mr. Burton in his office, and beheld the dusty pigeon-holes with dusty papers, and caught the first glimpse of things as they really were in the workshop of that man of business, he had, to

say the truth, been disgusted. And Mrs. Burton's early dinner, and Florence Burton's "plain face" and plain ways, had disconcerted him.

On that day he had repented of his intention with regard to Stratton; but he had carried out his purpose like a man, and now he rejoiced greatly that he had done so. He rejoiced greatly, though his hopes were somewhat sobered, and his views of life less grand than they had been. He was to start for Clavering early on the following morning, intending to spend his Christmas at home, and we will see him and listen to him as he bade farewell to one of the members of Mr. Burton's family.

He was sitting in a small back parlour in Mr. Burton's house, and on the table of the room there was burning a single candle. It was a dull, dingy, brown room, furnished with horsehair-covered chairs, an old horsehair sofa, and heavy rusty curtains. I don't know that there was in the room any attempt at ornament, as certainly there was no evidence of wealth. It was now about seven o'clock in the evening, and tea was over in Mrs. Burton's establishment. Harry Clavering had had his tea, and had eaten his hot muffin, at the further side from the fire of the family table, while Florence had poured out the tea, and Mrs. Burton had sat by the fire on one side with a handkerchief over her lap, and Mr. Burton had been comfortable with his arm-chair and his slippers on the other side. When tea was over, Harry had made his parting speech to Mrs. Burton, and that lady had kissed him, and bade God bless him. "I'll see you for a moment before you go, in my office, Harry," Mr. Burton had said. Then Harry had gone downstairs, and some one else had gone boldly with him, and they two were sitting together in the dingy brown room. After that I need hardly tell my reader what had become of Harry Clavering's perpetual life-enduring heart's misery.

He and Florence were sitting on the old horsehair sofa, and Florence's hand was in his. "My darling," he said, "how am I to live for the next two years?"

"You mean five years, Harry."

"No; I mean two,—that is two, unless I can make the time less. I believe you'd be better pleased to think it was ten."

"Much better pleased to think it was ten than to have no such hope at all. Of course we shall see each other. It's not as though you were going to New Zealand."

"I almost wish I were. One would agree then as to the necessity of this cursed delay."

"Harry, Harry!"

"It is accursed. The prudence of the world in these latter days seems to me to be more abominable than all its other iniquities."

"But, Harry, we should have no income."

"Income is a word that I hate."

"Now you are getting on to your high horse, and you know I always go out of the way when you begin to prance on that beast. As for me, I don't want to leave papa's house where I'm sure of my bread and butter, till I'm sure of it in another."

"You say that, Florence, on purpose to torment me."

"Dear Harry, do you think I want to torment you on your last night? The truth is, I love you so well that I can afford to be patient for you."

"I hate patience, and always did. Patience is one of the worst vices I know. It's almost as bad as humility. You'll tell me you're 'umble next. If you'll only add that you're contented, you'll describe yourself as one of the lowest of God's creatures."

"I don't know about being 'umble, but I am contented. Are not you contented with me, sir?"

"No,—because you're not in a hurry to be married."

"What a goose you are. Do you know I'm not sure that if you really love a person, and are quite confident about him,—as I am of you,—that having to look forward to being married is not the best part of it all. I suppose you'll like to get my letters now, but I don't know that you'll care for them much when we've been man and wife for ten years."

"But one can't live upon letters."

"I shall expect you to live upon mine, and to grow fat on them. There;—I heard papa's step on the stairs. He said you were to go to him. Good-by, Harry;—dearest Harry! What a blessed wind it was that blew you here."

"Stop a moment;—about your getting to Clavering. I shall come for you on Easter-eve."

"Oh, no;—why should you have so much trouble and expense?"

"I tell you I shall come for you,—unless, indeed, you decline to travel with me."

"It will be so nice! And then I shall be sure to have you with me the first moment I see them. I shall think it very awful when I first meet your father."

"He's the most good-natured man, I should say, in England."

"But he'll think me so plain. You did at first, you know. But he won't be uncivil enough to tell me so, as you did. And Mary is to be married in Easter week? Oh, dear, oh, dear; I shall be so shy among them all."

"You shy! I never saw you shy in my life. I don't suppose you were ever really put out yet."

"But I must really put you out, because papa is waiting for you. Dear, dear, dearest Harry. Though I am so patient I shall count the hours till you come for me. Dearest Harry!" Then she bore with him, as he pressed her close to his bosom, and kissed her lips, and her forehead, and her glossy hair. When he was gone she sat down alone for a few minutes on the old sofa, and hugged herself in her happiness. What a happy wind that had been which had blown such a lover as that for her to Stratton!

"I think he's a good young man," said Mrs. Burton, as soon as she was left with her old husband upstairs.

"Yes, he's a good young man. He means very well."

"But he is not idle; is he?"

"No—no; he's not idle. And he's very clever;—too clever, I'm afraid. But I think he'll do well, though it may take him some time to settle."

"It seems so natural his taking to Flo; doesn't it? They've all taken one when they went away, and they've all done very well. Deary me; how sad the house will be when Flo has gone."

"Yes,—it'll make a difference that way. But what then? I wouldn't wish to keep one of 'em at home for that reason."

"No, indeed. I think I'd feel ashamed of myself to have a daughter not married, or not in the way to be married afore she's thirty. I couldn't bear to think that no young man should take a fancy to a girl of mine. But Flo's not twenty yet, and Carry, who was the oldest to go, wasn't four-and-twenty when Scarness took her." Thereupon the old lady put her handkerchief to the corner of her eyes, and wept gently.

"Flo isn't gone yet," said Mr. Burton.

"But I hope, B., it's not to be a long engagement. I don't like long engagements. It ain't good,—not for the girl; it ain't, indeed."

"We were engaged for seven years."

"People weren't so much in a hurry then at anything; but I ain't sure it was very good for me. And though we weren't just married, we were living next door and saw each other. What'll come to Flo if she's to be here and he's to be up in London, pleasuring himself?"

"Flo must bear it as other girls do," said the father, as he got up from his chair.

"I think he's a good young man; I think he is," said the mother. "But don't stand out for too much for 'em to begin upon. What matters? Sure if they were to be a little short you could help 'em." To such a suggestion as this Mr. Burton thought it as well to make no answer, but with ponderous steps descended to his office.

"Well, Harry," said Mr. Burton, "so you're to be off in the morning?"

"Yes, sir; I shall breakfast at home to-morrow."

"Ah,—when I was your age I always used to make an early start. Three hours before breakfast never does any hurt. But it shouldn't be more than that. The wind gets into the stomach." Harry had no remark to make on this, and waited, therefore, till Mr. Burton went on. "And you'll be up in London by the 10th of next month?"

"Yes, sir; I intend to be at Mr. Beilby's office on the 11th."

"That's right. Never lose a day. In losing a day now, you don't lose what you might earn now in a day, but what you might be earning when you're at your best. A young man should always remember that. You can't dispense with a round in the ladder going up. You only make your time at the top so much the shorter."

"I hope you'll find that I'm all right, sir. I don't mean to be idle."

"Pray don't. Of course, you know, I speak to you very differently from what I should do if you were simply going away from my office. What I shall have to give Florence will be very little,—that is, compa-

ratively little. She shall have a hundred a year, when she marries, till I die; and after my death and her mother's she will share with the others. But a hundred a year will be nothing to you."

"Won't it, sir? I think a very great deal of a hundred a year. I'm to have a hundred and fifty from the office; and I should be ready to marry on that to-morrow."

"You couldn't live on such an income,—unless you were to alter your habits very much."

"But I will alter them."

"We shall see. You are so placed that by marrying you would lose a considerable income; and I would advise you to put off thinking of it for the next two years."

"My belief is, that settling down would be the best thing in the world to make me work."

"We'll try what a year will do. So Florence is to go to your father's house at Easter?"

"Yes, sir; she has been good enough to promise to come, if you have no objection."

"It is quite as well that they should know her early. I only hope they will like her as well as we like you. Now I'll say good-night,—and good-by." Then Harry went, and walking up and down the High Street of Stratton, thought of all that he had done during the past year.

On his arrival at Stratton that idea of perpetual misery arising from blighted affection was still strong within his breast. He had given all his heart to a false woman who had betrayed him. He had risked all his fortune on one cast of the die, and, gambler-like, had lost everything. On the day of Julia's marriage he had shut himself up at the school,—luckily it was a holiday,—and had flattered himself that he had gone through some hours of intense agony. No doubt he did suffer somewhat, for in truth he had loved the woman; but such sufferings are seldom perpetual, and with him they had been as easy of cure as with most others. A little more than a year had passed, and now he was already engaged to another woman. As he thought of this he did not by any means accuse himself of inconstancy or of weakness of heart. It appeared to him now the most natural thing in the world that he should love Florence Burton. In those old days he had never seen Florence, and had hardly thought seriously of what qualities a man really wants in a wife. As he walked up and down the hill of Stratton Street with the kiss of the dear, modest, affectionate girl still warm upon his lips, he told himself that a marriage with such a one as Julia Brabazon would have been altogether fatal to his chance of happiness.

And things had occurred and rumours had reached him which assisted him much in adopting this view of the subject. It was known to all the Claverings,—and even to all others who cared about such things,—that Lord and Lady Ongar were not happy together, and it had been already said that Lady Ongar had misconducted herself. There was a

certain count whose name had come to be mingled with hers in a way that was, to say the least of it, very unfortunate. Sir Hugh Clavering had declared, in Mrs. Clavering's hearing, though but little disposed in general to make many revelations to any of the family at the rectory, "that he did not intend to take his sister-in-law's part. She had made her own bed, and she must lie upon it. She had known what Lord Ongar was before she had married him, and the fault was her own." So much Sir Hugh had said, and, in saying it, had done all that in him lay to damn his sister-in-law's fair fame. Harry Clavering, little as he had lived in the world during the last twelve months, still knew that some people told a different story. The earl too and his wife had not been in England since their marriage;—so that these rumours had been filtered to them at home through a foreign medium. During most of their time they had been in Italy, and now, as Harry knew, they were at Florence. He had heard that Lord Ongar had declared his intention of suing for a divorce; but that he supposed to be erroneous, as the two were still living under the same roof. Then he heard that Lord Ongar was ill; and whispers were spread abroad darkly and doubtingly, as though great misfortunes were apprehended.

Harry could not fail to tell himself that had Julia become his wife, as she had once promised, these whispers and this darkness would hardly have come to pass. But not on that account did he now regret that her early vows had not been kept. Living at Stratton, he had taught himself to think much of the quiet domesticities of life, and to believe that Florence Burton was fitter to be his wife than Julia Brabazon. He told himself that he had done well to find this out, and that he had been wise to act upon it. His wisdom had in truth consisted in his capacity to feel that Florence was a nice girl, clever, well-minded, high-principled, and full of spirit,—and in falling in love with her as a consequence. All his regard for the quiet domesticities had come from his love, and had had no share in producing it. Florence was bright-eyed. No eyes were ever brighter, either in tears or in laughter. And when he came to look at her well he found that he had been an idiot to think her plain. "There are things that grow to beauty as you look at them,—to exquisite beauty; and you are one of them," he had said to her. "And there are men," she had answered, "who grow to flattery as you listen to them,—to impudent flattery; and you are one of them." "I thought you plain the first day I saw you. That's not flattery." "Yes, sir, it is; and you mean it for flattery. But after all, Harry, it comes only to this, that you want to tell me that you have learned to love me." He repeated all this to himself as he walked up and down Stratton, and declared to himself that she was very lovely. It had been given to him to ascertain this, and he was rather proud of himself. But he was a little diffident about his father. He thought that, perhaps, his father might see Florence as he himself had first seen her, and might not have discernment enough to ascertain his mistake as he had done. But Florence was not going to

Clavering at once, and he would be able to give beforehand his own account of her. He had not been home since his engagement had been a thing settled; but his position with regard to Florence had been declared by letter, and his mother had written to the young lady asking her to come to Clavering.

When Harry got home all the family received him with congratulations. "I am so glad to think that you should marry early," his mother said to him in a whisper. "But I am not married yet, mother," he answered.

"Do show me a lock of her hair," said Fanny, laughing. "It's twice prettier hair than yours, though she doesn't think half so much about it as you do," said her brother, pinching Fanny's arm. "But you'll show me a lock, won't you," said Fanny.

"I'm so glad she's to be here at my marriage," said Mary, "because then Edward will know her. I'm so glad that he will see her." "Edward will have other fish to fry, and won't care much about her," said Harry.

"It seems you're going to do the regular thing," said his father, "like all the good apprentices. Marry your master's daughter, and then become Lord Mayor of London." This was not the view in which it had pleased Harry to regard his engagement. All the other "young men" that had gone to Mr. Burton's had married Mr. Burton's daughters,—or, at least, enough had done so to justify the Stratton assertion that all had fallen into the same trap. The Burtons, with their five girls, were supposed in Stratton to have managed their affairs very well, and something of these hints had reached Harry's ears. He would have preferred that the thing should not have been made so common, but he was not fool enough to make himself really unhappy on that head. "I don't know much about becoming Lord Mayor," he replied. "That promotion doesn't lie exactly in our line." "But marrying your master's daughter does, it seems," said the Rector. Harry thought that this as coming from his father was almost ill-natured, and therefore dropped the conversation.

"I'm sure we shall like her," said Fanny.

"I think that I shall like Harry's choice," said Mrs. Clavering.

"I do hope Edward will like her," said Mary.

"Mary," said her sister, "I do wish you were once married. When you are, you'll begin to have a self of your own again. Now you're no better than an unconscious echo."

"Wait for your own turn, my dear," said the mother.

Harry had reached home on a Saturday, and the following Monday was Christmas-day. Lady Clavering, he was told, was at home at the park, and Sir Hugh had been there lately. No one from the house except the servants were seen at church either on the Sunday or on Christmas-day. "But that shows nothing," said the Rector, speaking in anger. "He very rarely does come, and when he does, it would be better that he should be away. I think that he likes to insult me by misconducting himself. They say that she is not well, and I can easily believe that all

this about her sister makes her unhappy. If I were you I would go up and call. Your mother was there the other day, but did not see them. I think you'll find that he's away, hunting somewhere. I saw the groom going off with three horses on Sunday afternoon. He always sends them by the church gate just as we're coming out."

So Harry went up to the house, and found Lady Clavering at home. She was looking old and careworn, but she was glad to see him. Harry was the only one of the rectory family who had been liked at the great house since Sir Hugh's marriage, and he, had he cared to do so, would have been made welcome there. But, as he had once said to Sir Hugh's sister-in-law, if he shot the Clavering game, he would be expected to do so in the guise of a head gamekeeper, and he did not choose to play that part. It would not suit him to drink Sir Hugh's claret, and be bidden to ring the bell, and to be asked to step into the stable for this or that. He was a fellow of his college, and quite as big a man, he thought, as Sir Hugh. He would not be a hanger-on at the park, and, to tell the truth, he disliked his cousin quite as much as his father did. But there had even been a sort of friendship,—nay, occasionally almost a confidence, between him and Lady Clavering, and he believed that by her he was really liked.

Lady Clavering had heard of his engagement, and of course congratulated him. "Who told you?" he asked,—“was it my mother?"

"No; I have not seen your mother I don't know when. I think it was my maid told me. Though we somehow don't see much of you all at the rectory, our servants are no doubt more gracious with the rectory servants. I'm sure she must be nice, Harry, or you would not have chosen her. I hope she has got some money."

"Yes, I think she is nice. She is coming here at Easter."

"Ah, we shall be away then, you know; and about the money?"

"She will have a little, but very little;—a hundred a year."

"Oh, Harry, is not that rash of you? Younger brothers should always get money. You're the same as a younger brother, you know."

"My idea is to earn my own bread. It's not very aristocratic, but, after all, there are a great many more in the same boat with me."

"Of course you will earn your bread, but having a wife with money would not hinder that. A girl is not the worse because she can bring some help. However, I'm sure I hope you'll be happy."

"What I meant was that I think it best when the money comes from the husband."

"I'm sure I ought to agree with you, because we never had any." Then there was a pause. "I suppose you've heard about Lord Ongar," she said.

"I have heard that he is very ill."

"Very ill. I believe there was no hope when we heard last; but Julia never writes now."

"I'm sorry that it is so bad as that," said Harry, not well knowing what else to say.

"As regards Julia, I do not know whether it may not be for the best.

It seems to be a cruel thing to say, but of course I cannot but think most of her. You have heard, perhaps, that they have not been happy?"

"Yes; I had heard that."

"Of course; and what is the use of pretending anything with you? You know what people have said of her."

"I have never believed it."

"You always loved her, Harry. Oh, dear, I remember how unhappy that made me once, and I was so afraid that Hugh would suspect it. She would never have done for you;—would she, Harry?"

"She did a great deal better for herself," said Harry.

"If you mean that ironically, you shouldn't say it now. If he dies, she will be well off, of course, and people will in time forget what has been said,—that is, if she will live quietly. The worst of it is that she fears nothing."

"But you speak as though you thought she had been—been—"

"I think she was probably imprudent, but I believe nothing worse than that. But who can say what is absolutely wrong, and what only imprudent? I think she was too proud to go really astray. And then with such a man as that, so difficult and so ill-tempered——! Sir Hugh thinks——" But at that moment the door was opened and Sir Hugh came in.

"What does Sir Hugh think?" said he.

"We were speaking of Lord Ongar," said Harry, sitting up and shaking hands with his cousin.

"Then, Harry, you were speaking on a subject that I would rather not have discussed in this house. Do you understand that, Hermione? I will have no talking about Lord Ongar or his wife. We know very little, and what we hear is simply uncomfortable. Will you dine here to-day, Harry?"

"Thank you, no; I have only just come home."

"And I am just going away. That is, I go to-morrow. I cannot stand this place. I think it the dullest neighbourhood in all England, and the most gloomy house I ever saw. Hermione likes it."

To this last assertion Lady Clavering expressed no assent; nor did she venture to contradict him.

CHAPTER V.

LADY ONGAR'S RETURN.

BUT Sir Hugh did not get away from Clavering Park on the next morning as he had intended. There came to him that same afternoon a message by telegraph, to say that Lord Ongar was dead. He had died at Florence on the afternoon of Christmas-day, and Lady Ongar had expressed her intention of coming at once to England.

"Why the devil doesn't she stay where she is?" said Sir Hugh, to his wife. "People would forget her there, and in twelve months time the row would be all over."

"Perhaps she does not want to be forgotten," said Lady Clavering.

"Then she should want it. I don't care whether she has been guilty or not. When a woman gets her name into such a mess as that, she should keep in the background."

"I think you are unjust to her, Hugh."

"Of course you do. You don't suppose that I expect anything else. But if you mean to tell me that there would have been all this row, if she had been decently prudent, I tell you that you're mistaken."

"Only think what a man he was."

"She knew that when she took him, and should have borne with him while he lasted. A woman isn't to have seven thousand a year for nothing."

"But you forget that not a syllable has been proved against her, or been attempted to be proved. She has never left him, and now she has been with him in his last moments. I don't think you ought to be the first to turn against her."

"If she would remain abroad, I would do the best I could for her. She chooses to return home; and as I think she's wrong, I won't have her here;—that's all. You don't suppose that I go about the world accusing her?"

"I think you might do something to fight her battle for her."

"I will do nothing,—unless she takes my advice and remains abroad. You must write to her now, and you will tell her what I say. It's an infernal bore, his dying at this moment; but I suppose people won't expect that I'm to shut myself up."

For one day only did the baronet shut himself up, and on the following, he went whither he had before intended.

Lady Clavering thought it proper to write a line to the rectory, informing the family there that Lord Ongar was no more. This she did in a note to Mrs. Clavering; and when it was received, there came over the faces of them all that lugubrious look, which is, as a matter of course, assumed by decorous people when tidings come of the death of any one who has been known to them, even in the most distant way. With the exception of Harry, all the rectory Claverings had been introduced to Lord Ongar, and were now bound to express something approaching to sorrow. Will any one dare to call this hypocrisy? If it be so called, who in the world is not a hypocrite? Where is the man or woman who has not a special face for sorrow before company? The man or woman who has no such face, would at once be accused of heartless impropriety.

"It is very sad," said Mrs. Clavering; "only think, it is but little more than a year since you married them!"

"And twelve such months as they have been for her!" said the Rector, shaking his head. His face was very lugubrious, for though as a parson he was essentially a kindly, easy man, to whom humbug was odious, and who dealt little in the austerities of clerical denunciation, still

he had his face of pulpit sorrow for the sins of the people,—what I may perhaps call his clerical knack of gentle condemnation,—and could therefore assume a solemn look, and a little saddened motion of his head, with more ease than people who are not often called upon for such action.

"Poor woman!" said Fanny, thinking of the woman's married sorrows, and her early widowhood.

"Poor man," said Mary, shuddering as she thought of the husband's fate.

"I hope," said Harry, almost sententiously, "that no one in this house will condemn her upon such mere rumours as have been heard."

"Why should any one in this house condemn her," said the Rector, "even if there were more than rumours? My dears, judge not, lest ye be judged. As regards her, we are bound by close ties not to speak ill of her—or even to think ill, unless we cannot avoid it. As far as I know, we have not even any reason for thinking ill." Then he went out, changed the tone of his countenance among the rectory stables, and lit his cigar.

Three days after that a second note was brought down from the great house to the rectory, and this was from Lady Clavering to Harry. "Dear Harry," ran the note,—“Could you find time to come up to me this morning? Sir Hugh has gone to North Priory.—Ever yours, H. C.” Harry, of course, went, and as he went, he wondered how Sir Hugh could have had the heart to go to North Priory at such a moment. North Priory was a hunting seat some thirty miles from Clavering, belonging to a great nobleman with whom Sir Hugh much consorted. Harry was grieved that his cousin had not resisted the temptation of going at such a time, but he was quick enough to perceive that Lady Clavering alluded to the absence of her lord as a reason why Harry might pay his visit to the house with satisfaction.

"I'm so much obliged to you for coming," said Lady Clavering. "I want to know if you can do something for me." As she spoke, she had a paper in her hand which he immediately perceived to be a letter from Italy.

"I'll do anything I can, of course, Lady Clavering."

"But I must tell you, that I hardly know whether I ought to ask you. I'm doing what would make Hugh very angry. But he is so unreasonable, and so cruel about Julia. He condemns her simply because, as he says, there is no smoke without fire. That is such a cruel thing to say about a woman;—is it not?"

Harry thought that it was a cruel thing, but as he did not wish to speak evil of Sir Hugh before Lady Clavering, he held his tongue.

"When we got the first news by telegraph, Julia said that she intended to come home at once. Hugh thinks that she should remain abroad for some time, and indeed I am not sure but that would be best. At any rate he made me write to her, and advise her to stay. He declared that if she came at once he would do nothing for her. The truth is, he does not want to have her here, for if she were again in the house he would have to take her part, if ill-natured things were said."

"That's cowardly," said Harry, stoutly.

"Don't say that, Harry, till you have heard it all. If he believes these things, he is right not to wish to meddle. He is very hard, and always believes evil. But he is not a coward. If she were here, living with him as my sister, he would take her part, whatever he might himself think."

"But why should he think ill of his own sister-in-law? I have never thought ill of her."

"You loved her, and he never did;—though I think he liked her too in his way. But that's what he told me to do, and I did it. I wrote to her, advising her to remain at Florence till the warm weather comes, saying that as she could not specially wish to be in London for the season, I thought she would be more comfortable there than here;—and then I added that Hugh also advised her to stay. Of course I did not say that he would not have her here,—but that was his threat."

"She is not likely to press herself where she is not wanted."

"No,—and she will not forget her rank and her money;—for that must now be hers. Julia can be quite as hard and as stubborn as he can. But I did write as I say, and I think that if she had got my letter before she had written herself, she would perhaps have stayed. But here is a letter from her, declaring that she will come at once. She will be starting almost as soon as my letter gets there, and I am sure she will not alter her purpose now."

"I don't see why she should not come if she likes it."

"Only that she might be more comfortable there. But read what she says. You need not read the first part. Not that there is any secret; but it is about him and his last moments, and it would only pain you."

Harry longed to read the whole, but he did as he was bid, and began the letter at the spot which Lady Clavering marked for him with her finger. "I have to start on the third, and as I shall stay nowhere except to sleep at Turin and Paris, I shall be home by the eighth;—I think on the evening of the eighth. I shall bring only my own maid, and one of his men who desires to come back with me. I wish to have apartments taken for me in London. I suppose Hugh will do as much as this for me?"

"I am quite sure Hugh won't," said Lady Clavering, who was watching his eye as he read.

Harry said nothing, but went on reading. "I shall only want two sitting-rooms and two bedrooms,—one for myself and one for Clara, and should like to have them somewhere near Piccadilly,—in Clarges Street, or about there. You can write me a line, or send me a message to the Hôtel Bristol, at Paris. If anything fails, so that I should not hear, I shall go to the Palace Hotel; and, in that case, should telegraph for rooms from Paris."

"Is that all I'm to read?" Harry asked.

"You can go on and see what she says as to her reason for coming."

So Harry went on reading. "I have suffered much, and of course I know that I must suffer more; but I am determined that I will face the worst of it at once. It has been hinted to me that an attempt will be made to interfere with the settlement——" "Who can have hinted that?" said Harry. Lady Clavering suspected who might have done so, but she made no answer. "I can hardly think it possible; but, if it is done, I will not be out of the way. I have done my duty as best I could, and have done it under circumstances that I may truly say were terrible;—and I will go on doing it. No one shall say that I am ashamed to show my face and claim my own. You will be surprised when you see me. I have aged so much;——"

"You need not go on," said Lady Clavering. "The rest is about nothing that signifies."

Then Harry refolded the letter and gave it back to his companion.

"Sir Hugh is gone, and therefore I could not show him that in time to do anything; but if I were to do so, he would simply do nothing, and let her go to the hotel in London. Now that would be unkind;—would it not?"

"Very unkind, I think."

"It would seem so cold to her on her return."

"Very cold. Will you not go and meet her?"

Lady Clavering blushed as she answered. Though Sir Hugh was a tyrant to his wife, and known to be such, and though she knew that this was known, she had never said that it was so to any of the Claverings; but now she was driven to confess it. "He would not let me go, Harry. I could not go without telling him, and if I told him he would forbid it."

"And she is to be all alone in London, without any friend?"

"I shall go to her as soon as he will let me. I don't think he will forbid my going to her, perhaps after a day or two; but I know he would not let me go on purpose to meet her."

"It does seem hard."

"But about the apartments, Harry? I thought that perhaps you would see about them. After all that has passed I could not have asked you, only that now, as you are engaged yourself, it is nearly the same as though you were married. I would ask Archibald, only then there would be a fuss between Archibald and Hugh; and somehow I look on you more as a brother-in-law than I do Archibald."

"Is Archie in London?"

"His address is at his club, but I daresay he is at North Priory also. At any rate, I shall say nothing to him."

"I was thinking he might have met her."

"Julia never liked him. And, indeed, I don't think she will care so much about being met. She was always independent in that way, and would go over the world alone better than many men. But couldn't you run up and manage about the apartments? A woman coming home as a widow,—and in her position,—feels an hotel to be so public."

"I will see about the apartments."

"I knew you would. And there will be time for you to send to me, so that I can write to Paris;—will there not? There is more than a week, you know."

But Henry did not wish to go to London on this business immediately. He had made up his mind that he would not only take the rooms, but that he would also meet Lady Ongar at the station. He said nothing of this to Lady Clavering, as, perhaps, she might not approve; but such was his intention. He was wrong no doubt. A man in such cases should do what he is asked to do, and do no more. But he repeated to himself the excuse that Lady Clavering had made,—namely, that he was already the same as a married man, and that, therefore, no harm could come of his courtesy to his cousin's wife's sister. But he did not wish to make two journeys to London, nor did he desire to be away for a full week out of his holidays. Lady Clavering could not press him to go at once, and, therefore, it was settled as he proposed. She would write to Paris immediately, and he would go up to London after three or four days. "If we only knew of any apartments, we could write," said Lady Clavering. "You could not know that they were comfortable," said Harry; "and you will find that I will do it in plenty of time." Then he took his leave; but Lady Clavering had still one other word to say to him. "You had better not say anything about all this at the rectory; had you?" Harry, without considering much about it, said that he would not mention it.

Then he went away and walked again about the park, thinking of it all. He had not seen her since he had walked round the park, in his misery, after parting with her in the garden. How much had happened since then! She had been married in her glory, had become a countess, and then a widow, and was now returning with a tarnished name, almost repudiated by those who had been her dearest friends; but with rank and fortune at her command,—and again a free woman. He could not but think what might have been his chance were it not for Florence Burton! But much had happened to him also. He had almost perished in his misery;—so he told himself;—but had once more "tricked his beams,"—that was his expression to himself,—and was now "flaming in the forehead" of a glorious love. And even if there had been no such love, would a widowed countess with a damaged name have suited his ambition, simply because she had the rich dower of the poor wretch to whom she had sold herself? No, indeed. There could be no question of renewed vows between them now;—there could have been no such question even had there been no "glorious love," which had accrued to him almost as his normal privilege in right of his pupilage in Mr. Burton's office. No;—there could be, there could have been, nothing now between him and the widowed Countess of Ongar. But, nevertheless, he liked the idea of meeting her in London. He felt some triumph in the thought that he should be the first to touch her hand on her return after

all that she had suffered. He would be very courteous to her, and would spare no trouble that would give her any ease. As for her rooms, he would see to everything of which he could think that might add to her comfort; and a wish crept upon him, uninvited, that she might be conscious of what he had done for her.

Would she be aware, he wondered, that he was engaged? Lady Clavering had known it for the last three months, and would probably have mentioned the circumstance in a letter. But perhaps not. The sisters, he knew, had not been good correspondents; and he almost wished that she might not know it. "I should not care to be talking to her about Florence," he said to himself.

It was very strange that they should come to meet in such a way, after all that had passed between them in former days. Would it occur to her that he was the only man she had ever loved?—for, of course, as he well knew, she had never loved her husband. Or would she now be too callous to everything but the outer world to think at all of such a subject? She had said that she was aged, and he could well believe it. Then he pictured her to himself in her weeds, worn, sad, thin, but still proud and handsome. He had told Florence of his early love for the woman whom Lord Ongar had married, and had described with rapture his joy that that early passion had come to nothing. Now he would have to tell Florence of this meeting; and he thought of the comparison he would make between her bright young charms and the shipwrecked beauty of the widow. On the whole, he was proud that he had been selected for the commission, as he liked to think of himself as one to whom things happened which were out of the ordinary course. His only objection to Florence was that she had come to him so much in the ordinary course.

"I suppose the truth is you are tired of our dulness," said his father to him, when he declared his purpose of going up to London, and, in answer to certain questions that were asked him, had hesitated to tell his business.

"Indeed, it is not so," said Harry, earnestly; "but I have a commission to execute for a certain person, and I cannot explain what it is."

"Another secret;—eh, Harry?"

"I am very sorry,—but it is a secret. It is not one of my own seeking; that is all I can say." His mother and sisters also asked him a question or two; but when he became mysterious, they did not persevere. "Of course it is something about Florence," said Fanny. "I'll be bound he is going to meet her. What will you bet me, Harry, you don't go to the play with Florence before you come home?" To this Henry deigned no answer; and after that no more questions were asked.

He went up to London and took rooms in Bolton Street. There was a pretty fresh-looking light drawing-room, or, indeed, two drawing-rooms, and a small dining-room, and a large bed-room looking over upon the trees of some great nobleman's garden. As Harry stood at the window it

seemed so odd to him that he should be there. And he was busy about everything in the chamber, seeing that all things were clean and well ordered. Was the woman of the house sure of her cook? Sure; of course she was sure. Had not old Lady Dimdaff lived there for two years, and nobody ever was so particular about her victuals as Lady Dimdaff. "And would Lady Ongar keep her own carriage?" As to this Harry could say nothing. Then came the question of price, and Harry found his commission very difficult. The sum asked seemed to be enormous. "Seven guineas a week at that time of the year!" Lady Dimdaff had always paid seven guineas. "But that was in the season," suggested Harry. To this the woman replied that it was the season now. Harry felt that he did not like to drive a bargain for the Countess, who would probably care very little what she paid, and therefore assented. But a guinea a day for lodgings did seem a great deal of money. He was prepared to marry and commence housekeeping upon a less sum for all his expenses. However, he had done his commission, had written to Lady Clavering, and had telegraphed to Paris. He had almost brought himself to write to Lady Ongar, but when the moment came he abstained. He had sent the telegram as from H. Clavering. She might think that it came from Hugh if she pleased.

He was unable not to attend specially to his dress when he went to meet her at the Victoria Station. He told himself that he was an ass,—but still he went on being an ass. During the whole afternoon he could do nothing but think of what he had in hand. He was to tell Florence everything, but had Florence known the actual state of his mind, I doubt whether she would have been satisfied with him. The train was due at 8 P.M. He dined at the Oxford and Cambridge Club at six, and then went to his lodgings to take one last look at his outer man. The evening was very fine, but he went down to the station in a cab, because he would not meet Lady Ongar in soiled boots. He told himself again that he was an ass; and then tried to console himself by thinking that such an occasion as this seldom happened once to any man,—could hardly happen more than once to any man. He had hired a carriage for her, not thinking it fit that Lady Ongar should be taken to her new home in a cab; and when he was at the station, half an hour before the proper time, was very fidgety because it had not come. Ten minutes before eight he might have been seen standing at the entrance to the station looking out anxiously for the vehicle. The man was there, of course, in time, but Harry made himself angry because he could not get the carriage so placed that Lady Ongar might be sure of stepping into it without leaving the platform. Punctually to the moment the coming train announced itself by its whistle, and Harry Clavering felt himself to be in a flutter.

The train came up along the platform, and Harry stood there expecting to see Julia Brabazon's head projected from the first window that caught his eye. It was of Julia Brabazon's head, and not of Lady Ongar's, that he was thinking. But he saw no sign of her presence while the carriages

were coming to a stand-still, and the platform was covered with passengers before he discovered her whom he was seeking. At last he encountered in the crowd a man in livery, and found from him that he was Lady Ongar's servant. "I have come to meet Lady Ongar," said Harry, "and have got a carriage for her." Then the servant found his mistress, and Harry offered his hand to a tall woman in black. She wore a black straw hat with a veil, but the veil was so thick that Harry could not at all see her face.

"Is that Mr. Clavering?" said she.

"Yes," said Harry, "it is I. Your sister asked me to take rooms for you, and as I was in town I thought I might as well meet you to see if you wanted anything. Can I get the luggage?"

"Thank you;—the man will do that. He knows where the things are."

"I ordered a carriage;—shall I show him where it is? Perhaps you will let me take you to it? They are so stupid here. They would not let me bring it up."

"It will do very well I'm sure. It's very kind of you. The rooms are in Bolton Street. I have the number here. Oh! thank you." But she would not take his arm. So he led the way, and stood at the door while she got into the carriage with her maid. "I'd better show the man where you are now." This he did, and afterwards shook hands with her through the carriage window. This was all he saw of her, and the words which have been repeated were all that were spoken. Of her face he had not caught a glimpse.

As he went home to his lodgings he was conscious that the interview had not been satisfactory. He could not say what more he wanted, but he felt that there was something amiss. He consoled himself, however, by reminding himself that Florence Burton was the girl whom he had really loved, and not Julia Brabazon. Lady Ongar had given him no invitation to come and see her, and therefore he determined that he would return home on the following day without going near Bolton Street. He had pictured to himself beforehand the sort of description he would give to Lady Clavering of her sister; but, seeing how things had turned out, he made up his mind that he would say nothing of the meeting. Indeed, he would not go up to the great house at all. He had done Lady Clavering's commission,—at some little trouble and expense to himself, and there should be an end of it. Lady Ongar would not mention that she had seen him. He doubted, indeed, whether she would remember whom she had seen. For any good that he had done, or for any sentiment that there had been, his cousin Hugh's butler might as well have gone to the train. In this mood he returned home, consoling himself with the fitness of things which had given him Florence Burton instead of Julia Brabazon for a wife.

CHAPTER VI.

THE REV. SAMUEL SAUL.

DURING Harry's absence in London, a circumstance had occurred at the rectory which had surprised some of them and annoyed others a good deal. Mr. Saul, the curate, had made an offer to Fanny. The Rector and Fanny declared themselves to be both surprised and annoyed. That the Rector was in truth troubled by the thing was very evident. Mrs. Clavering said that she had almost suspected it,—that she was at any rate not surprised; as to the offer itself, of course she was sorry that it should have been made, as it could not suit Fanny to accept it. Mary was surprised, as she had thought Mr. Saul to be wholly intent on other things; but she could not see any reason why the offer should be regarded as being on his part unreasonable.

"How can you say so, mamma?" Such had been Fanny's indignant exclamation when Mrs. Clavering had hinted that Mr. Saul's proceeding had been expected by her.

"Simply because I saw that he liked you, my dear. Men under such circumstances have different ways of showing their liking."

Fanny, who had seen all of Mary's love-affair from the beginning to the end, and who had watched the Reverend Edward Fielding in all his very conspicuous manoeuvres, would not agree to this. Edward Fielding from the first moment of his intimate acquaintance with Mary had left no doubt of his intentions on the mind of any one. He had talked to Mary and walked with Mary whenever he was allowed or found it possible to do so. When driven to talk to Fanny, he had always talked about Mary. He had been a lover of the good, old, plainspoken stamp, about whom there had been no mistake. From the first moment of his coming much about Clavering Rectory the only question had been about his income. "I don't think Mr. Saul ever said a word to me except about the poor people and the church services," said Fanny. "That was merely his way," said Mrs. Clavering. "Then he must be a goose," said Fanny. "I am very sorry if I have made him unhappy, but he had no business to come to me in that way."

"I suppose I shall have to look for another curate," said the Rector. But this was said in private to his wife.

"I don't see that at all," said Mrs. Clavering. "With many men it would be so; but I think you will find that he will take an answer, and that there will be an end of it."

Fanny, perhaps, had a right to be indignant, for certainly Mr. Saul had given her no fair warning of his intention. Mary had for some months been intent rather on Mr. Fielding's church matters than on those going on in her own parish, and therefore there had been nothing singular in the fact that Mr. Saul had said more on such matters to Fanny than to her sister. Fanny was eager and active, and as Mr. Saul was very eager and

very active, it was natural that they should have had some interests in common. But there had been no private walkings, and no talkings that could properly be called private. There was a certain book which Fanny kept, containing the names of all the poor people in the parish, to which Mr. Saul had access equally with herself; but its contents were of a most prosaic nature, and when she had sat over it in the rectory drawing-room, with Mr. Saul by her side, striving to extract more than twelve pennies out of charity shillings, she had never thought that it would lead to a declaration of love.

He had never called her Fanny in his life,—not up to the moment when she declined the honour of becoming Mrs. Saul. The offer itself was made in this wise. She had been at the house of old Widow Tubb, half-way between Cumberly Green and the little village of Clavering, striving to make that rheumatic old woman believe that she had not been cheated by a general conspiracy of the parish in the matter of a distribution of coal, when, just as she was about to leave the cottage, Mr. Saul came up. It was then past four, and the evening was becoming dark, and there was, moreover, a slight drizzle of rain. It was not a tempting evening for a walk of a mile and a half through a very dirty lane; but Fanny Clavering did not care much for such things, and was just stepping out into the mud and moisture, with her dress well looped up, when Mr. Saul accosted her.

"I'm afraid you'll be very wet, Miss Clavering."

"That will be better than going without my cup of tea, Mr. Saul, which I should have to do if I stayed any longer with Mrs. Tubb. And I have got an umbrella."

"But it is so dark and dirty," said he.

"I'm used to that, as you ought to know."

"Yes; I do know it," said he, walking on with her. "I do know that nothing ever turns you away from the good work."

There was something in the tone of his voice which Fanny did not like. He had never complimented her before. They had been very intimate and had often scolded each other. Fanny would accuse him of exacting too much from the people, and he would retort upon her that she coddled them. Fanny would often decline to obey him, and he would make angry hints as to his clerical authority. In this way they had worked together pleasantly, without any of the awkwardness which on other terms would have arisen between a young man and a young woman. But now that he began to praise her with some peculiar intention of meaning in his tone, she was confounded. She had made no immediate answer to him, but walked on rapidly through the mud and slush.

"You are very constant," said he; "I have not been two years at Clavering without finding that out." It was becoming worse and worse. It was not so much his words which provoked her as the tone in which they were uttered. And yet she had not the slightest idea of what was

coming. If, thoroughly admiring her devotion and mistaken as to her character, he were to ask her to become a Protestant nun, or suggest to her that she should leave her home and go as nurse into a hospital, then there would have occurred the sort of folly of which she believed him to be capable. Of the folly which he now committed, she had not believed him to be capable.

It had come on to rain hard, and she held her umbrella low over her head. He also was walking with an open umbrella in his hand, so that they were not very close to each other. Fanny, as she stepped on impetuously, put her foot into the depth of a pool, and splashed herself thoroughly.

"Oh dear, oh dear," said she; "this is very disagreeable."

"Miss Clavering," said he, "I have been looking for an opportunity to speak to you, and I do not know when I may find another so suitable as this." She still believed that some proposition was to be made to her which would be disagreeable, and perhaps impertinent,—but it never occurred to her that Mr. Saul was in want of a wife.

"Doesn't it rain too hard for talking?" she said.

"As I have begun I must go on with it now," he replied, raising his voice a little, as though it were necessary that he should do so to make her hear him through the rain and darkness. She moved a little further away from him with unthinking irritation; but still he went on with his purpose. "Miss Clavering, I know that I am ill-suited to play the part of a lover;—very ill suited." Then she gave a start and again splashed herself sadly. "I have never read how it is done in books, and have not allowed my imagination to dwell much on such things."

"Mr. Saul, don't go on; pray don't." Now she did understand what was coming.

"Yes, Miss Clavering, I must go on now; but not on that account would I press you to give me an answer to-day. I have learned to love you, and if you can love me in return, I will take you by the hand, and you shall be my wife. I have found that in you which I have been unable not to love,—not to covet that I may bind it to myself as my own for ever. Will you think of this, and give me an answer when you have considered it fully?"

He had not spoken altogether amiss, and Fanny, though she was very angry with him, was conscious of this. The time he had chosen might not be considered suitable for a declaration of love, nor the place; but having chosen them, he had, perhaps, made the best of them. There had been no hesitation in his voice, and his words had been perfectly audible.

"Oh, Mr. Saul, of course I can assure you at once," said Fanny. "There need not be any consideration. I really have never thought —" Fanny, who knew her own mind on the matter thoroughly, was hardly able to express herself plainly and without incivility. As soon as that phrase "of course" had passed her lips, she felt that it

should not have been spoken. There was no need that she should insult him by telling him that such a proposition from him could have but one answer.

"No, Miss Clavering; I know you have never thought of it, and therefore it would be well that you should take time. I have not been able to make manifest to you by little signs, as men do who are less awkward, all the love that I have felt for you. Indeed, could I have done so, I should still have hesitated till I had thoroughly resolved that I might be better with a wife than without one; and had resolved also, as far as that might be possible for me, that you also would be better with a husband."

"Mr. Saul, really that should be for me to think of."

"And for me also. Can any man offer to marry a woman,—to bind a woman for life to certain duties, and to so close an obligation without thinking whether such bonds would be good for her as well as for himself? Of course you must think for yourself;—and so have I thought for you. You should think for yourself, and you should think also for me."

Fanny was quite aware that as regarded herself, the matter was one which required no more thinking. Mr. Saul was not a man with whom she could bring herself to be in love. She had her own ideas as to what was loveable in men, and the eager curate, splashing through the rain by her side, by no means came up to her standard of excellence. She was unconsciously aware that he had altogether mistaken her character, and given her credit for more abnegation of the world than she pretended to possess, or was desirous of possessing. Fanny Clavering was in no hurry to get married. I do not know that she had even made up her mind that marriage would be a good thing for her; but she had an untroubled conviction that if she did marry, her husband should have a house and an income. She had no reliance on her own power of living on a potato, and with one new dress every year. A comfortable home, with nice, comfortable things around her, ease in money matters, and elegance in life, were charms with which she had not quarrelled, and, though she did not wish to be hard upon Mr. Saul on account of his mistake, she did feel that in making his proposition he had blundered. Because she chose to do her duty as a parish clergyman's daughter, he thought himself entitled to regard her as devotee, who would be willing to resign everything to become the wife of a clergyman, who was active, indeed, but who had not one shilling of income beyond his curacy. "Mr. Saul," she said, "I can assure you I need take no time for further thinking. It cannot be as you would have it."

"Perhaps I have been abrupt. Indeed, I feel that it is so, though I did not know how to avoid it."

"It would have made no difference. Indeed, indeed, Mr. Saul, nothing of that kind could have made a difference."

"Will you grant me this;—that I may speak to you again on the same subject after six months?"

"It cannot do any good."

"It will do this good;—that for so much time you will have had the idea before you." Fanny thought that she would have Mr. Saul himself before her, and that that would be enough. Mr. Saul, with his rusty clothes and his thick, dirty shoes, and his weak, blinking eyes, and his mind always set upon the one wish of his life, could not be made to present himself to her in the guise of a lover. He was one of those men of whom women become very fond with the fondness of friendship, but from whom young women seem to be as far removed in the way of love as though they belonged to some other species. "I will not press you further," said he, "as I gather by your tone that it distresses you."

"I am so sorry if I distress you, but really, Mr. Saul, I could give you,—I never could give you any other answer."

Then they walked on silently through the rain,—silently, without a single word,—for more than half a mile, till they reached the rectory gate. Here it was necessary that they should, at any rate, speak to each other, and for the last three hundred yards Fanny had been trying to find the words which would be suitable. But he was the first to break the silence. "Good-night, Miss Clavering," he said, stopping and putting out his hand.

"Good-night, Mr. Saul."

"I hope that there may be no difference in our bearing to each other, because of what I have to-day said to you?"

"Not on my part;—that is, if you will forget it."

"No, Miss Clavering; I shall not forget it. If it had been a thing to be forgotten, I should not have spoken. I certainly shall not forget it."

"You know what I mean, Mr. Saul."

"I shall not forget it even in the way that you mean. But still I think you need not fear me, because you know that I love you. I think I can promise that you need not withdraw yourself from me, because of what has passed. But you will tell your father and your mother, and of course will be guided by them. And now, good-night." Then he went, and she was astonished at finding that he had had much the best of it in his manner of speaking and conducting himself. She had refused him very curtly, and he had borne it well. He had not been abashed, nor had he become sulky, nor had he tried to melt her by mention of his own misery. In truth he had done it very well,—only that he should have known better than to make any such attempt at all.

Mr. Saul had been right in one thing. Of course she told her mother, and of course her mother told her father. Before dinner that evening the whole affair was being debated in the family conclave. They all agreed that Fanny had had no alternative but to reject the proposition at once. That, indeed, was so thoroughly taken for granted, that the point was not discussed. But there came to be a difference between the Rector and Fanny on one side, and Mrs. Clavering and Mary on the other. "Upon

my word," said the Rector, "I think it was very impertinent." Fanny would not have liked to use that word herself, but she loved her father for using it.

"I do not see that," said Mrs. Clavering. "He could not know what Fanny's views in life might be. Curates very often marry out of the houses of the clergymen with whom they are placed, and I do not see why Mr. Saul should be debarred from the privilege of trying."

"If he had got to like Fanny what else was he to do?" said Mary.

"Oh, Mary, don't talk such nonsense," said Fanny. "Got to like! People shouldn't get to like people unless there's some reason for it."

"What on earth did he intend to live on?" demanded the Rector.

"Edward had nothing to live on, when you first allowed him to come here," said Mary.

"But Edward had prospects, and Saul, as far as I know, has none. He had given no one the slightest notice. If the man in the moon had come to Fanny I don't suppose she would have been more surprised."

"Not half so much, papa."

Then it was that Mrs. Clavering had declared that she was not surprised,—that she had suspected it, and had almost made Fanny angry by saying so. When Harry came back two days afterwards, the family news was imparted to him, and he immediately ranged himself on his father's side. "Upon my word I think that he ought to be forbidden the house," said Harry. "He has forgotten himself in making such a proposition."

"That's nonsense, Harry," said his mother. "If he can be comfortable coming here, there can be no reason why he should be uncomfortable. It would be an injustice to him to ask him to go, and a great trouble to your father to find another curate that would suit him so well." There could be no doubt whatever as to the latter proposition, and therefore it was quietly argued that Mr. Saul's fault, if there had been a fault, should be condoned. On the next day he came to the rectory, and they were all astonished at the ease with which he bore himself. It was not that he affected any special freedom of manner, or that he altogether avoided any change in his mode of speaking to them. A slight blush came upon his sallow face as he first spoke to Mrs. Clavering, and he hardly did more than say a single word to Fanny. But he carried himself as though conscious of what he had done, but in no degree ashamed of the doing it. The Rector's manner to him was stiff and formal;—seeing which Mrs. Clavering spoke to him gently, and with a smile. "I saw you were a little hard on him, and therefore I tried to make up for it," said she afterwards. "You were quite right," said the husband. "You always are. But I wish he had not made such a fool of himself. It will never be the same thing with him again." Harry hardly spoke to Mr. Saul the first time he met him, all of which Mr. Saul understood perfectly.

"Clavering," he said to Harry, a day or two after this, "I hope there is to be no difference between you and me."

"Difference! I don't know what you mean by difference."

"We were good friends, and I hope that we are to remain so. No doubt you know what has taken place between me and your sister."

"Oh, yes;—I have been told, of course."

"What I mean is, that I hope you are not going to quarrel with me on that account? What I did, is it not what you would have done in my position?—only you would have done it successfully?"

"I think a fellow should have some income, you know."

"Can you say that you would have waited for income before you spoke of marriage?"

"I think it might have been better that you should have gone to my father."

"It may be that that is the rule in such things, but if so I do not know it. Would she have liked that better?"

"Well;—I can't say."

"You are engaged? Did you go to the young lady's family first?"

"I can't say I did; but I think I had given them some ground to expect it. I fancy they all knew what I was about. But it's over now, and I don't know that we need say anything more about it."

"Certainly not. Nothing can be said that would be of any use; but I do not think I have done anything that you should resent."

"Resent is a strong word. I don't resent it, or, at any rate, I won't; and there may be an end of it." After this, Harry was more gracious with Mr. Saul, having an idea that the curate had made some sort of apology for what he had done. But that, I fancy, was by no means Mr. Saul's view of the case. Had he offered to marry the daughter of the Archbishop of Canterbury, instead of the daughter of the Rector of Clavering, he would not have imagined that his doing so needed an apology.

The day after his return from London Lady Clavering sent for Harry up to the house. "So you saw my sister in London?" she said.

"Yes," said Harry blushing; "as I was in town, I thought that I might as well meet her. But, as you said, Lady Ongar is able to do without much assistance of that kind. I only just saw her."

"Julia took it so kindly of you; but she seems surprised that you did not come to her the following day. She thought you would have called."

"Oh, dear, no. I fancied that she would be too tired and too busy to wish to see any mere acquaintance."

"Ah, Harry, I see that she has angered you," said Lady Clavering; "otherwise you would not talk about mere acquaintance."

"Not in the least. Angered me! How could she anger me? What I meant was that at such a time she would probably wish to see no one but people on business,—unless it was some one near to her, like yourself or Hugh."

"Hugh will not go to her."

"But you will do so; will you not?"

"Before long I will. You don't seem to understand, Harry,—and, perhaps, it would be odd if you did,—that I can't run up to town and back as I please. I ought not to tell you this, I dare say, but one feels as though one wanted to talk to some one about one's affairs. At the present moment, I have not the money to go,—even if there were no other reason." These last words she said almost in a whisper, and then she looked up into the young man's face, to see what he thought of the communication she had made him.

"Oh, money!" he said. "You could soon get money. But I hope it won't be long before you go."

On the next morning but one a letter came by the post for him from Lady Ongar. When he saw the handwriting, which he knew, his heart was at once in his mouth, and he hesitated to open his letter at the breakfast-table. He did open it and read it, but, in truth, he hardly understood it or digested it till he had taken it away with him up to his own room. The letter, which was very short, was as follows:—

DEAR FRIEND,

I FELT your kindness in coming to me at the station so much!—the more, perhaps, because others, who owed me more kindness, have paid me less. Don't suppose that I allude to poor Hermione, for, in truth, I have no intention to complain of her. I thought, perhaps, you would have come to see me before you left London; but I suppose you were hurried. I hear from Clavering that you are to be up about your new profession in a day or two. Pray come and see me before you have been many days in London. I shall have so much to say to you! The rooms you have taken are everything that I wanted, and I am so grateful!

Yours ever,
J. O.

When Harry had read and had digested this, he became aware that he was again fluttered. "Poor creature!" he said to himself; "it is sad to think how much she is in want of a friend."

The Study of Celtic Literature.

PART I.

THE summer before last I spent some weeks at Llandudno, on the Welsh coast. The best lodging-houses at Llandudno look eastward, towards Liverpool; and from that Saxon hive swarms are incessantly issuing, crossing the bay, and taking possession of the beach and the lodging-houses. Guarded by the Great and Little Orme's Head, and alive with the Saxon invaders from Liverpool, the eastern bay is an attractive point of interest, and many visitors to Llandudno never contemplate anything else. But, putting aside the charm of the Liverpool steamboats, perhaps the view, on this side, a little dissatisfies one after a while; the horizon wants mystery, the sea wants beauty, the coast wants verdure, and has a too bare austerity and aridity. At last one turns round and looks westward. Everything is changed. Over the mouth of the Conway and its sands is the eternal softness and mild light of the west; the low line of the mystic Anglesey, and the precipitous Penmaenmawr, and the great group of Carnedd Llewelyn and their brethren fading away, hill behind hill, in an ærial haze, make the horizon: between the foot of Penmaenmawr and the bending coast of Anglesey, the sea, a silver stream, disappears one knows not whither. On this side, Wales,—Wales, where the past still lives, where every place has its tradition, every name its poetry, and where the people, the genuine people, still knows this past, this tradition, this poetry, and lives with it, and clings to it; while, alas, the prosperous Saxon on the other side, the invader from Liverpool and Birkenhead, has long ago forgotten his. And the promontory where Llandudno stands is the very centre of this tradition; it is Creuddyn, *the bloody city*, where every stone has its story; there, opposite its decaying rival, Conway Castle, is Diganwy, not decaying but long since utterly decayed, some crumbling foundations on a crag-top and nothing more;—Diganwy, where Mael-gwyn shut up Elphin, and where Taliesin came to free him. Below, in a fold of the hill, is Llan-rhos, the church of the marsh, where the same Mael-gwyn, a British prince of real history, a bold and licentious chief, the original, it is said, of Arthur's Lancelot, shut himself up in the church to avoid the Yellow Plague, and peeped out through a hole in the door, and saw the monster and died. Behind among the woods, is Glod-daeth, *the place of feasting*, where the bards were entertained; and further away, up the valley of the Conway towards Llanrwst, is the Lake of Ceirionydd and Taliesin's grave. Or, again, looking seawards and Anglesey-wards, you have Pen-mon, Seiriol's isle and priory, where Mael-gwyn lies buried; you have the *Sands of*

Lamentation and Llys Helig, *Helig's Mansion*, a mansion under the waves, a sea-buried palace and realm. *Hac ibat Simois; hic est Sigeia tellus.*

As I walked up and down, last August year, looking at the waves as they washed this Sigeian land which has never had its Homer, and listening with curiosity to the strange, unfamiliar speech of its old possessors' obscure descendants, bathing people, vegetable-sellers, and donkey boys, who were all about me,—suddenly I heard, through the stream of unknown Welsh, words, not English, indeed, but still familiar. They came from a French nursery-maid, with some children. Profoundly ignorant of her relationship, this Gaulish Celt moved among her British cousins, speaking her polite neo-Latin tongue, and full of compassionate contempt, probably, for the Welsh barbarians and their jargon. What a revolution was here! How had the star of this daughter of Gomer waxed, while the star of these Cymry, his sons, had waned! What a difference of fortune in the two, since the days when, speaking the same language, they left their common dwelling-place in the heart of Asia; since the Cimmerians of the Euxine came in upon their western kinsmen, the sons of the giant Galates; since the sisters, Gaul and Britain, cut the mistletoe in their forests, and saw the coming of Cæsar! *Blanc, rouge, rocher, champ, église, seigneur*,—these words, by which the Gallo-Roman Celt now names white, and red, and rock, and field, and church, and lord, are no part of the speech of his true ancestors, they are words he has learnt; but since he learnt them they have had a world-wide success, and we all teach them to our children, and armies speaking them have dominated in every city of that Germany by which the British Celt was broken, and in the train of these armies, Saxon auxiliaries, a humbled contingent, have been fain to follow;—the poor Welshman still says, in the genuine tongue of his ancestors, *gwyn, goch, craig, maes, llan, arglwydd*; but his land is a province, and his history petty, and his Saxon subduers scout his speech as an obstacle to civilization; and the echo of all its kindred in other lands is growing every day fainter and more feeble; gone in Cornwall, going in Brittany and the Scotch Highlands, going, too, in Ireland;—and there, above all, the badge of the beaten race, the property of the vanquished.

But the Celtic genius was just then preparing, in Llandudno, to have its hour of revival. Workmen were busy in putting up a large tent-like wooden building, which attracted the eye of every new-comer, and which my little boys believed (their wish, no doubt, being father to their belief,) to be a circus. It turned out, however, to be no circus for Castor and Pollux, but a temple for Apollo and the Muses. It was the place where the Eisteddfod, or Bardic Congress of Wales, was about to be held; a meeting which has for its object (I quote the words of its promoters) "the diffusion of useful knowledge, the eliciting of native talent, and the cherishing of love of home and honourable fame by the cultivation of poetry, music, and art." My little boys were disappointed; but I, whose circus days are over, I, who have a professional interest in poetry, and

who, also, hating all one-sidedness and oppression, wish nothing better than that the Celtic genius should be able to show itself to the world and to make its voice heard, was delighted. I took my ticket, and waited impatiently for the day of opening. The day came, an unfortunate one; storms of wind, clouds of dust, an angry, dirty sea. The Saxons who arrived by the Liverpool steamers looked miserable; even the Welsh who arrived by land,—whether they were discomposd by the bad morning, or by the monstrous and crushing tax which the London and North-Western Railway Company levies on all whom it transports across those four miles of marshy peninsula between Conway and Llandudno,—did not look happy. First we went to the Gorsedd, or preliminary congress for conferring the degree of bard. The Gorsedd was held in the open air, at the windy corner of a street, and the morning was not favourable to open-air solemnities. The Welsh, too, share, it seems to me, with their Saxon invaders, an inaptitude for show and spectacle. Show and spectacle are better managed by the Latin race, and those whom it has moulded; the Welsh, like us, are a little awkward and resourceless in the organization of a festival. The presiding genius of the mystic circle, in our hideous nineteenth century costume relieved only by a green scarf, the wind drowning his voice and the dust powdering his whiskers, looked thoroughly wretched; so did the aspirants for bardic honours; and I believe, after about an hour of it, we all of us, as we stood shivering round the sacred stones, began half to wish for the Druid's sacrificial knife to end our sufferings. But the Druid's knife is gone from his hands; so we sought the shelter of the Eisteddfod building.

The sight inside was not lively. The president and his supporters mustered strong on the platform. On the floor the one or two front benches were pretty well filled, but their occupants were for the most part Saxons, who came there from curiosity, not from enthusiasm; and all the middle and back benches, where should have been the true enthusiasts,—the Welsh people,—were nearly empty. The president, I am sure, showed a national spirit which was admirable. He addressed us Saxons in our own language, and called us “the English branch of the descendants of the ancient Britons.” We received the compliment with the impassive dulness which is the characteristic of our nature; and the lively Celtic nature, which should have made up for the dulness of ours, was absent. A lady who sat by me, and who was the wife, I found, of a distinguished bard on the platform, told me, with emotion in her look and voice, how dear were these solemnities to the heart of her people, how deep was the interest which was aroused by them. I believe her, but still the whole performance, on that particular morning, was incurably lifeless. The recitation of the prize compositions began: pieces of verse and prose in the Welsh language, an essay on punctuality being, if I remember right, one of them; a poem on the march of Havelock, another. This went on for some time. Then Dr. Vaughan,—the well-known Nonconformist minister, a Welshman, and a good patriot,—addressed us in English. His

speech was a powerful one, and he succeeded, I confess, in sending a faint thrill through our front benches ; but it was the old familiar thrill which we have all of us felt a thousand times in Saxon chapels and meeting-halls, and had nothing bardic about it. I stepped out, and in the street I came across an acquaintance fresh from London and the parliamentary session. In a moment the spell of the Celtic genius was forgotten, the Philistinism of our Saxon nature made itself felt ; and my friend and I walked up and down by the roaring waves, talking not of ovides and bards, and triads and englyns, but of the sewage question, and the glories of our local self-government, and the mysterious perfections of the Metropolitan Board of Works.

I believe it is admitted, even by the admirers of Eisteddfods in general, that this particular Eisteddfod was not a success. Llandudno, it is said, was not the right place for it. Held in Conway Castle, as a few years ago it was, and its spectators,—an enthusiastic multitude,—filling the grand old ruin, I can imagine it a most impressive and interesting sight, even to a stranger labouring under the terrible disadvantage of being ignorant of the Welsh language. But even seen as I saw it at Llandudno, it had the power to set one thinking. An Eisteddfod is, no doubt, a kind of Olympic meeting ; and that the common people of Wales should care for such a thing, shows something Greek in them, something spiritual, something humane, something (I am afraid one must add) which in the English common people is not to be found. This line of reflection has been followed by the accomplished Bishop of St. David's, and by the *Saturday Review* : it is just, it is fruitful, and those who pursued it merit our best thanks. But, from peculiar circumstances, the Llandudno meeting was, as I have said, such as not at all to suggest ideas of Olympia, and of a multitude touched by the divine flame, and hanging on the lips of Pindar. It rather suggested the triumph of the prosaic, practical Saxon, and the approaching extinction of an enthusiasm which he derides as factitious, a literature which he disdains as trash, a language which he detests as a nuisance.

I must say I quite share the opinion of my brother Saxons as to the practical inconvenience of perpetuating the speaking of Welsh. It may cause a moment's distress to one's imagination when one hears that the last Cornish peasant who spoke the old tongue of Cornwall is dead ; but, no doubt, Cornwall is the better for adopting English, for becoming more thoroughly one with the rest of the country. The fusion of all the inhabitants of these islands into one homogeneous, English-speaking whole, the breaking down of barriers between us, the swallowing up of separate provincial nationalities, is a consummation to which the natural course of things irresistibly tends ; it is a necessity of what is called modern civilization, and modern civilization is a real, legitimate force ; the change must come, and its accomplishment is a mere affair of time. The sooner the Welsh language disappears as an instrument of the practical, political, social life of Wales, the better ; the better for England,

the better for Wales itself. Traders and tourists do excellent service by pushing the English wedge further and further into the heart of the principality; government, by hammering it harder and harder into the elementary schools. Nor, perhaps, can one have much sympathy with the literary cultivation of Welsh as an instrument of living literature; and in this respect Eisteddfods encourage, I think, a fantastic and mischief-working delusion. For all serious purposes in modern literature (and trifling purposes in it who would care to encourage?) the language of a Welshman is and must be English; if an Eisteddfod author has anything to say about punctuality or about the march of Havelock, he had much better say it in English; or rather, perhaps, what he has to say on these subjects may as well be said in Welsh, but the moment he has anything of real importance to say, anything the world will the least care to hear, he must speak English. Dilettantism might possibly do much harm here, might mislead and waste and bring to nought a genuine talent. For all modern purposes, I repeat, let us all as soon as possible be one people; let the Welshman speak English, and, if he is an author, let him write English.

So far, I go along with the stream of my brother Saxons; but here, I imagine, I part company with them. They will have nothing to do with the Welsh language and literature on any terms; they would gladly make a clean sweep of it from the face of the earth. I, on certain terms, wish to make a great deal more of it than is made now; and I regard the Welsh literature,—or rather, dropping the distinction between Welsh and Irish, Gaels and Cymris, let me say Celtic literature,—as an object of very great interest. My brother Saxons have, as is well known, a terrible way with them of wanting to improve everything but themselves off the face of the earth; I have no such passion for finding nothing but myself everywhere; I like variety to exist and to show itself to me, and I would not for the world have the lineaments of the Celtic genius lost. But I know my brother Saxons, I know their strength, and I know that the Celtic genius will make nothing of trying to set up barriers against them in the world of fact and brute force, of trying to hold its own against them as a political and social counter-power, as the soul of a hostile nationality. To me there is something mournful (and at this moment, when one sees what is going on in Ireland, how well may one say so!) in hearing a Welshman or an Irishman make pretensions,—natural pretensions, I admit, but how hopelessly vain!—to such a rival self-establishment; there is something mournful in hearing an Englishman scout them. Strength! alas, it is not strength, strength in the material world, which is wanting to us Saxons; we have plenty of strength for swallowing up and absorbing as much as we choose; there is nothing to hinder us from effacing the last poor material remains of that Celtic power which once was everywhere, but has long since, in the race of civilization, fallen out of sight. We may threaten them with extinction if we will, and may almost say in so threatening them, like Cæsar in threatening with death the tribune

Metellus, who closed the treasury doors against him: "And when I threaten this, young man, to threaten it is more trouble to me than to do it." It is not in the outward and visible world of material life, that the Celtic genius of Wales or Ireland can at this day hope to count for much; it is in the inward world of thought and science. What it *has* been, what it *has* done, let it ask us to attend to that, as a matter of science and history; not to what it will be or will do, as a matter of modern politics. It cannot count appreciably now as a material power; but, perhaps, if it can get itself thoroughly known as an object of science, it may count for a good deal,—far more than we Saxons, most of us, imagine,—as a spiritual power.

The bent of our time is towards science, towards knowing things as they are; so the Celt's claims towards having his genius and its works fairly treated, as objects of scientific investigation, the Saxon can hardly reject when these claims are urged simply on their own merits, and are not mixed up with extraneous pretensions which jeopardize them. What the French call the *science des origines*, the science of origins,—a science which is at the bottom of all real knowledge of the actual world, and which is every day growing in interest and importance,—is very incomplete without a thorough critical account of the Celts, and their genius, language, and literature. This science has still great progress to make, but its progress, made even within the recollection of those of us who are in middle life, has already affected our common notions about the Celtic race; and this change, too, shows how science, the knowing things as they are, may even have salutary practical consequences. I remember when I was young I was taught to think of Celt as separated by an impassable gulf from Teuton; my father, in particular, was never weary of contrasting them; he insisted much oftener on the separation between us and them than on the separation between us and any other race in the world; in the same way Lord Lyndhurst, in words long famous, called the Irish, "aliens in speech, in religion, in blood." This naturally created a profound sense of estrangement; it doubled the estrangement which political and religious differences already made between us and the Irish: it seemed to make this estrangement immense, incurable, fatal. It begot a strange reluctance, as any one may see by reading the preface to the great text-book for Welsh poetry, the *Myvyrian Archaeology*, published at the beginning of this century, to further,—nay, allow,—even among quiet, peaceable people like the Welsh, the publication of the documents of their ancient literature, the monuments of the Cymric genius; such was the sense of repulsion, the sense of incompatibility, of radical antagonism, making it seem dangerous to us to let such opposites to ourselves have speech and utterance. Certainly the Jew,—the Jew of ancient times, at least,—then seemed a thousand degrees nearer than the Celt to us. Puritanism had so assimilated Bible ideas and phraseology; names like Ebenezer, and notions like that of hewing Agag in pieces, came so natural to us, that the sense of affinity between the Teutonic and the Hebrew nature was quite strong;

a steady, middle-class Anglo-Saxon much more imagined himself Elud's cousin than Ossian's. But meanwhile, the pregnant and striking ideas of the ethnologists about the true natural grouping of the human race, the doctrine of a great Indo-European unity, comprising Hindoos, Persians, Greeks, Latins, Celts, Teutons, Slavonians, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, of a Semitic unity and of a Mongolian unity, separated by profound distinguishing marks from the Indo-European unity and from one another, was slowly acquiring consistency and popularizing itself. So strong and real could the sense of sympathy or antipathy, grounded upon real identity or diversity in race, grow in men of culture, that we read of a genuine Teuton,—Wilhelm von Humboldt,—finding, even in the sphere of religion, that sphere where the might of Semitism has been so overpowering, the food which most truly suited his spirit in the productions not of the alien Semitic genius, but of the genius of Greece or India, the Teuton's born kinsfolk of the common Indo-European family. "Towards Semitism he felt himself," we read, "far less drawn;" he had the consciousness of a certain antipathy in the depths of his nature to this, and to its "absorbing, tyrannous, terrorist religion," as to the opener, more flexible Indo-European genius, this religion appeared. "The mere workings of the old man in him!" Semitism will readily reply; and though one can hardly admit this short and easy method of settling the matter, it must be owned that Humboldt's is an extreme case of Indo-Europeanism, useful as letting us see what may be the power of race and primitive constitution, but not likely, in the spiritual sphere, to have many companion cases equalling it. Still, even in this sphere, the tendency is in Humboldt's direction; the modern spirit tends more and more to establish a sense of native diversity between our European bent and the Semitic bent, and to eliminate, even in our religion, certain elements as purely and excessively Semitic, and therefore, in right, not combinable with our European nature, not assimilable by it. This tendency is now quite visible even among ourselves, and even, as I have said, within the great sphere of the Semitic genius, the sphere of religion; and for its justification this tendency appeals to science, the science of origins; it appeals to this science as teaching us which way our natural affinities and repulsions lie. It appeals to this science, and in part it comes from it; it is, in considerable part, an indirect practical result from it. In the sphere of politics, too, there has, in the same way, appeared an indirect practical result from this science; the sense of antipathy to the Irish people, of radical estrangement from them, has visibly abated amongst all the better part of us; the remorse for past ill-treatment of them, the wish to make amends, to do them justice, to fairly unite, if possible, in one people with them, has visibly increased; hardly a book on Ireland is now published, hardly a debate on Ireland now passes in Parliament, without this appearing. Fanciful as the notion may at first seem, I am inclined to think that the march of science,—science insisting that there is no such original chasm between the Celt and the Saxon as we once popularly imagined, that they

are not truly, what Lord Lyndhurst called them, *aliens in blood* from us, that they are our brothers in the great Indo-European family,—has had a share, an appreciable share, in producing this changed state of feeling. No doubt, the release from alarm and struggle, the sense of firm possession, solid security, and overwhelming power; no doubt these, allowing and encouraging humane feelings to spring up in us, have done much; no doubt a state of fear and danger, Ireland in hostile conflict with us, our union violently disturbed, might, while it drove back all humane feelings, make also the old sense of utter estrangement revive. Nevertheless, so long as such a malignant revolution of events does not actually come about, so long the new sense of kinship and kindness lives, works, and gathers strength; and the longer it so lives and works, the more it makes any such malignant revolution improbable. And this new, reconciling sense has, I say, its roots in science.

However, on these indirect benefits of science we must not lay too much stress. Only this must be allowed; it is clear that there are now in operation two influences, both favourable to a more attentive and impartial study of Celtism than it has yet ever received from us. One is, the strengthening in us of the feeling of Indo-Europeanism; the other, the strengthening in us of the scientific sense generally. The first breaks down barriers between us and the Celt, relaxes the estrangement between us; the second begets the desire to know his case thoroughly, and to be just to it. This is a very different matter from the political and social Celtization of which certain enthusiasts dream; but it is not to be despised by any one to whom the Celtic genius is dear; and it is possible, while the other is not.

To know the Celtic case thoroughly, one must know the Celtic people; and to know them, one must know that by which a people best express themselves,—their literature. Few of us have any notion what a mass of Celtic literature is really yet extant and accessible. One constantly finds even very accomplished people, who fancy that the remains of Welsh and Irish literature are as inconsiderable by their volume, as, in their opinion, they are by their intrinsic merit; that these remains consist of a few prose stories, in great part borrowed from the literature of nations more civilized than the Welsh or Irish nation, and of some unintelligible poetry. As to Welsh literature, they have heard, perhaps, of the *Black Book of Caermarthen*, or of the *Red Book of Hergest*, and they imagine that one or two famous manuscript books like these contain the whole matter. They have no notion that, in real truth, to quote the words of one who is no friend to the high pretensions of Welsh literature, but their most formidable impugner, Mr. Nash:—"The Myvyrian manuscripts alone, now deposited in the British Museum, amount to 47 volumes of poetry, of various sizes, containing about 4,700 pieces of poetry, in 16,000 pages, besides about 2,000 englynion or epigrammatic stanzas. There are also in the same collection, 53 volumes of prose, in about 15,300 pages, containing a great many curious documents on various subjects.

Besides these, which were purchased of the widow of the celebrated Owen Jones, the editor of the *Myvyrian Archæology*, there are a vast number of collections of Welsh manuscripts in London, and in the libraries of the gentry of the principality." The *Myvyrian Archæology* here spoken of by Mr. Nash, I have already mentioned: he calls its editor, Owen Jones, celebrated; he is not so celebrated but that he claims a word, in passing, from a professor of poetry. He was a Denbighshire peasant, born before the middle of the last century, in that vale of Myvyr, which has given its name to his archæology. From his childhood he had that passion for the old treasures of his country's literature, which to this day, as I have said, in the common people of Wales is so remarkable; these treasures were unprinted, scattered, difficult of access, jealously guarded. "More than once," says Edward Lhuyd, who in his *Archæologia Britannica*, brought out by him in 1707, would gladly have given them to the world, "more than once I had a promise from the owner, and the promise was afterwards retracted at the instigation of certain persons, pseudo-politicians, as I think, rather than men of letters." So Owen Jones went up, a young man of nineteen, to London, and got employment in a furrier's shop in Thames Street; for forty years, with a single object in view, he worked at his business; and at the end of that time his object was won. He had risen in his employment till the business had become his own, and he was now a man of considerable means; but those means had been sought by him for one purpose only, the purpose of his life, the dream of his youth,—the giving permanence and publicity to the treasures of his national literature. Gradually he got manuscript after manuscript transcribed, and at last, in 1801, he jointly with two friends brought out in three large volumes, printed in double columns, his *Myvyrian Archæology of Wales*. The book is full of imperfections, it presented itself to a public which could not judge of its importance, and it brought upon its author, in his life-time, more attack than honour. He died not long afterwards, and now he lies buried in All-hallows Church, in London, with his tomb turned towards the east, away from the green vale of Clwyd and the mountains of his native Wales; but his book is the great repertory of the literature of his nation, the comparative study of languages and literatures gains every day more followers, and no one of these followers, at home or abroad, touches Welsh literature without paying homage to the Denbighshire peasant's name; if the bards' glory and his own are still matter of moment to him,—*si quid mentem mortalia tangunt*,—he may be satisfied.

Even the printed stock of early Welsh literature is, therefore, considerable, and the manuscript stock of it is very great indeed. Of Irish literature, the stock, printed and manuscript, is truly vast; the work of cataloguing and describing this has been admirably performed by another remarkable man, who died only the other day, Mr. Eugene O'Curry. Obscure Scaliger of a despised literature, he deserves some weightier voice to praise him than the voice of an unlearned belletristic trifler like me; he belongs to the race of the giants in literary research and industry,—a

race now almost extinct. Without a literary education, and impeded too, it appears, by much trouble of mind and infirmity of body, he has accomplished such a thorough work of classification and description for the chaotic mass of Irish literature, that the student has now half his labour saved, and needs only to use his materials as Eugene O'Curry hands them to him. It was as a professor in the Catholic University in Dublin that O'Curry gave the lectures in which he has done the student this service; it is touching to find that these lectures, a splendid tribute of devotion to the Celtic cause, had no hearer more attentive, more sympathizing, than a man, himself, too, the champion of a cause more interesting than prosperous,—one of those causes which please noble spirits, but do not please Destiny, which have Cato's adherence, but not Heaven's,—Dr. Newman. Eugene O'Curry, in these lectures of his, taking as his standard the quarto page of Dr. O'Donovan's edition of the *Annals of the Four Masters* (and this printed monument of one branch of Irish literature occupies by itself, let me say in passing, seven large quarto volumes, containing 4,215 pages of closely printed matter), Eugene O'Curry says, that the great vellum manuscript books belonging to Trinity College, Dublin, and to the Royal Irish Academy,—books with fascinating titles, the *Book of the Dun Cow*, the *Book of Leinster*, the *Book of Ballymote*, the *Speckled Book*, the *Book of Lecain*, the *Yellow Book of Lecain*,—have, between them, matter enough to fill 11,400 of these pages; the other vellum manuscripts in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, have matter enough to fill 8,200 pages more; and the paper manuscripts of Trinity College, and the Royal Irish Academy together, would fill, he says, 30,000 such pages more. The ancient laws of Ireland, the so-called Brehon laws, which a commission is now publishing, were not yet completely transcribed when O'Curry wrote; but what had even then been transcribed was sufficient, he says, to fill nearly 8,000 of Dr. O'Donovan's pages. Here are, at any rate, materials enough with a vengeance. These materials fall, of course, into several divisions. The most literary of these divisions, the *Tales*, consisting of *Historic Tales* and *Imaginative Tales*, distributes the contents of its *Historic Tales* as follows:—Battles, voyages, sieges, tragedies, cow-spoils, courtships, adventures, land-expeditions, sea-expeditions, banquets, elopements, loves, lake-irruptions, colonizations, visions. Of what a treasure-house of resources for the history of Celtic life and the Celtic genius does that bare list, even by itself, call up the image! The *Annals of the Four Masters* give “the years of foundations and destructions of churches and castles, the obituaries of remarkable persons, the inaugurations of kings, the battles of chiefs, the contests of clans, the ages of bards, abbots, bishops, &c.”* Through other divisions of this mass of materials,—the books of pedigrees and genealogies, the martyrologies and festologies, such as the *Féilicé of Angus the Culdee*, the topographical tracts, such as the *Dinnsenchas*,—we touch “the most ancient traditions of the Irish, traditions which were committed to writing at a period when the ancient

* Dr. O'Conor in his *Catalogue of the Stowe MSS.* (quoted by O'Curry).

customs of the people were unbroken." We touch "the early history of Ireland, civil and ecclesiastical." We get "the origin and history of the countless monuments of Ireland, of the ruined church and tower, the sculptured cross, the holy well, and the commemorative name of almost every townland and parish in the whole island." We get, in short, "the most detailed information upon almost every part of ancient Gaelic life, a vast quantity of valuable details of life and manners."*

And then, besides, to our knowledge of the Celtic genius, Mr. Norris has brought us from Cornwall, M. de la Villemarqué from Brittany, contributions, insignificant indeed in quantity, if one compares them with the mass of the Irish materials extant, but far from insignificant in value.

We want to know what all this mass of documents really tells us about the Celt. But the mode of dealing with these documents, and with the whole question of Celtic antiquity, has hitherto been most unsatisfactory. Those who have dealt with them, have gone to work, in general, either as warm Celt-lovers or as warm Celt-haters, and not as disinterested students of an important matter of science. One party seems to set out with the determination to find everything in Celtism and its remains; the other, with the determination to find nothing in them. A simple seeker for truth has a hard time of it between the two. An illustration or so will make clear what I mean. First let us take the Celt-lovers, who, though they engage one's sympathies more than the Celt-haters, yet, inasmuch as assertion is more dangerous than denial, show their weaknesses in a more signal way. A very learned man, the Rev. Edward Davies, published in the early part of this century two important books on Celtic antiquity. The second of these books, *The Mythology and Rites of the British Druids*, contains, with much other interesting matter, the charming story of Taliesin. Bryant's book on mythology was then in vogue, and Bryant, in the fantastical manner so common in those days, found in Greek mythology what he called an arkite idolatry, pointing to Noah's deluge and the ark. Davies, wishing to give dignity to his Celtic mythology, determines to find the arkite idolatry there too, and the style in which he proceeds to do this affords a good specimen of the extravagance which has caused Celtic antiquity to be looked upon with so much suspicion. The story of Taliesin begins thus :—

"In former times there was a man of noble descent in Penllyn. His name was Tegid Voel, and his paternal estate was in the middle of the Lake of Tegid, and his wife was called Ceridwen."

Nothing could well be simpler; but what Davies finds in this simple opening of Taliesin's story, is prodigious :—

"Let us take a brief view of the proprietor of this estate. Tegid Voel—*bald serenity*—presents itself at once to our fancy. The painter would find no embarrassment in sketching the portrait of this sedate, venerable personage, whose crown is partly stripped of its hoary honours. But of all the gods of antiquity, none could with propriety sit for this

* O'Curry.

picture excepting Saturn, the acknowledged representative of Noah, and the husband of Rhen, which was but another name for Ceres, the genius of the ark."

And Ceres, the genius of the ark, is of course found in Ceridwen, "the British Ceres, the arkite goddess who initiates us into the deepest mysteries of the arkite superstition."

Now the story of Taliesin, as it proceeds, exhibits Ceridwen as a sorceress; and a sorceress, like a goddess, belongs to the world of the supernatural; but, beyond this, the story itself does not suggest one particle of relationship between Ceridwen and Ceres. All the rest comes out of Davies's fancy, and is established by reasoning of the force of that about "bald serenity."

It is not difficult for the other side, the Celt-haters, to get a triumph over such adversaries as these. Perhaps I ought to ask pardon of Mr. Nash, whose *Taliesin* it is impossible to read without profit and instruction, for classing him among the Celt-haters; his determined scepticism about Welsh antiquity seems to me, however, to betray a preconceived hostility, a bias taken beforehand, as unmistakable as Mr. Davies's prepossessions. But Mr. Nash is often very happy in demolishing, for really the Celt-lovers seem often to try to lay themselves open, and to invite demolition. Full of his notions about an arkite idolatry and a Helio-dæmonic worship, Edward Davies gives this translation of an old Welsh poem, entitled *The Panegyric of Lludd the Great*:—

"A song of dark import was composed by the distinguished Ogdoad, who assembled on the day of the moon, and went in open procession. On the day of Mars they allotted wrath to their adversaries; on the day of Mercury they enjoyed their full pomp; on the day of Jove they were delivered from the detested usurpers; on the day of Venus, the day of the great influx, they swam in the blood of men;* on the day of the Sun there truly assemble five ships and five hundred of those who make supplication: O Brithi, Brithoi! O son of the compacted wood, the shock overtakes me; we all attend on Adonai, on the area of Pwmpai."

That looks Helio-dæmonic enough, undoubtedly; especially when Davies prints *O Brithi, Brithoi!* in Hebrew characters, as being "vestiges of sacred hymns in the Phœnician language." But then comes Mr. Nash, and says that the poem is a middle-age composition, with nothing Helio-dæmonic about it; that it is meant to ridicule the monks; and that *O Brithi, Brithoi!* is a mere piece of unintelligible jargon in mockery of the chants used by the monks at prayers; and he gives this counter-translation of the poem:—

"They make harsh songs; they note eight numbers. On Monday they will be prying about. On Tuesday they separate, angry with their adversaries. On Wednesday they drink, enjoying themselves ostentatiously. On Thursday they are in the choir; their poverty is disagreeable. Friday is a day of abundance, the men are swimming in pleasures.*

* Here, where Saturday should come, something is wanting in the manuscript.

On Sunday, certainly, five legions and five hundreds of them, they pray, they make exclamations : O Brithi, Brithoi ! Like wood-cuckoos in noise they will be, every one of the idiots banging on the ground."

As one reads Mr. Nash's explanation and translation after Edward Davies's, one feels that a flood of the broad daylight of common-sense has been suddenly shed over the *Panegyric on Lludd the Great*, and one is very grateful to Mr. Nash.

Or, again, when another Celt-lover, Mr. Herbert, has bewildered us with his fancies, as uncritical as Edward Davies's; with his neo-Druidism, his Mithriac heresy, his Crist-celi, or man-god of the mysteries; and, above all, his ape of the sanctuary, "signifying the mercurial principle, that strange and unexplained disgrace of paganism," Mr. Nash comes to our assistance, and is most refreshingly rational. To confine ourselves to the ape of the sanctuary only. Mr. Herbert constructs his monster,—to whom he says "great sanctity, together with foul crime, deception, and treachery, is ascribed,—out of four lines of old Welsh poetry, of which he adopts the following translation :—

"Without the ape, without the stall of the cow, without the mundane rampart, the world will become desolate, not requiring the cuckoos to convene the appointed dance over the green."

One is not very clear what all this means, but it has, at any rate, a solemn air about it, which prepares one for the development of its first-named personage, the ape, into the mystical ape of the sanctuary. The cow, too,—says another famous Celt-lover, Dr. Owen, the learned author of the *Welsh Dictionary*,—the cow (*henfon*) is the cow of transmigration; and this also sounds natural enough. But Mr. Nash, who has a keen eye for the piecing which frequently happens in these old fragments, has observed that just here, where the ape of the sanctuary and the cow of transmigration make their appearance, there seems to come a cluster of adages, popular sayings; and he at once remembers an adage preserved with the word *henfon* in it, where, as he justly says, "the cow of transmigration cannot very well have place." This adage, rendered literally in English, is :—"Whoso owns the old cow, let him go at her tail;" and the meaning of it, as a popular saying, is clear and simple enough. With this clue, Mr. Nash examines the whole passage, suggests that *heb eppa*, "without the ape," with which Mr. Herbert begins, in truth belongs to something going before and is to be translated somewhat differently; and, in short, that what we really have here is simply these three adages one after another :—"The first share is the full one. Politeness is natural, says the ape. Without the cow-stall there would be no dung-heap." And one can hardly doubt that Mr. Nash is quite right.

Even friends of the Celt, who are perfectly incapable of extravagances of this sort, fall too often into a loose mode of criticism concerning him and the documents of his history, which is unsatisfactory in itself, and also gives an advantage to his many enemies. One of the best and most delightful friends he has ever had,—M. de la Villemarqué,—has seen clearly

enough that often the alleged antiquity of his documents cannot be proved, that it can be even disproved, and that he must rely on other supports than this to establish what he wants; yet one finds him saying: "I open the collection of Welsh bards from the sixth to the tenth century. Taliesin, one of the oldest of them," . . . and so on. But his adversaries deny that we have really any such thing as a "collection of Welsh bards from the sixth to the tenth century," or that a "Taliesin, one of the oldest of them," exists to be quoted in defence of any thesis. Sharon Turner, again, whose *Vindication of the Ancient British Poems* was prompted, it seems to me, by a critical instinct at bottom sound, is weak and uncritical in details like this: "The strange poem of Taliesin, called the *Spoils of Annwn*, implies the existence (in the sixth century, he means) of mythological tales about Arthur; and the frequent allusion of the old Welsh bards to the persons and incidents which we find in the *Mabinogion*, are further proofs that there must have been such stories in circulation amongst the Welsh." But the critic has to show, against his adversaries, that the *Spoils of Annwn* is a real poem of the sixth century, with a real sixth-century poet called Taliesin for its author, before he can use it to prove what Sharon Turner there wishes to prove; and, in like manner, the high antiquity of persons and incidents that are found in the manuscripts of the *Mabinogion*,—manuscripts written, like the famous *Red Book of Hergest*, in the library of Jesus College at Oxford, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,—is not proved by allusions of the old Welsh bards, until (which is just the question at issue) the pieces containing these allusions are proved themselves to possess a very high antiquity. In the present state of the question as to the early Welsh literature, this sort of reasoning is inconclusive and bewildering, and merely carries us round in a circle. Again, it is worse than inconclusive reasoning, it shows so uncritical a spirit that it begets grave mistrust, when Mr. Williams ab Ithel, employed by the Master of the Rolls to edit the *Brut y Tywysogion*, the "Chronicle of the Princes," says in his introduction, in many respects so useful and interesting: "We may add, on the authority of a scrupulously faithful antiquary, and one that was deeply versed in the traditions of his order—the late Iolo Morganwg—that King Arthur in his institutes of the Round Table introduced the age of the world for events which occurred before Christ, and the year of Christ's nativity for all subsequent events." Now, putting out of question Iolo Morganwg's character as an antiquary, it is obvious that no one, not Grimm himself, can stand in that way as "authority" for King Arthur's having thus regulated chronology by his institutes of the Round Table, or even for there ever having been any such institutes at all. And finally, greatly as I respect and admire Mr. Eugene O'Curry, unquestionable as is the sagacity, the moderation, which he in general unites with his immense learning, I must say that he, too, like his brother Celt-lovers, sometimes lays himself dangerously open. For instance, the Royal Irish Academy possesses in its Museum a relic of the greatest value, the

Domhnach Airgid, a Latin manuscript of the four gospels. The outer box containing this manuscript is of the 14th century, but the manuscript itself, says O'Curry (and no man is better able to judge) is certainly of the 6th. That is all very well. "But," O'Curry then goes on, "I believe no reasonable doubt can exist that the *Domhnach Airgid* was actually sanctified by the hand of our great Apostle." One has a thrill of excitement at receiving this assurance from such a man as Eugene O'Curry; one believes that he is really going to make it clear that St. Patrick did actually sanctify the *Domhnach Airgid* with his own hands; and one reads on:—"As St. Patrick, says an ancient life of St. Mac Carthainn preserved by Colgan in his *Acta Sanctorum Hibernie*, was on his way from the north, and coming to the place now called Clogher, he was carried over a stream by his strong man, Bishop Mac Carthainn, who, while bearing the Saint, groaned aloud, exclaiming: 'Ugh! Ugh!'

"'Upon my good word,' said the Saint, 'it was not usual with you to make that noise.'

"'I am now old and infirm,' said Bishop Mac Carthainn, 'and all my early companions in mission-work you have settled down in their respective churches, while I am still on my travels.'

"'Found a church then,' said the Saint, 'that shall not be too near us (that is to his own Church of Armagh) for familiarity, nor too far from us for intercourse.'

"And the saint then left Bishop Mac Carthainn there, at Clogher, and bestowed the *Domhnach Airgid* upon him, which had been given to Patrick from heaven, when he was on the sea, coming to Erin."

The legend is full of poetry, full of humour; and one can quite appreciate, after reading it, the tact which gave St. Patrick such a prodigious success in organizing the primitive church in Ireland; the new bishop, "not too near us for familiarity, nor too far from us for intercourse," is a masterpiece. But how can Eugene O'Curry have imagined that it takes no more than a legend like that, to prove that the particular manuscript now in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy was once in St. Patrick's pocket?

I insist upon extravagances like these, not in order to throw ridicule upon the Celt-lovers,—on the contrary, I feel a great deal of sympathy with them,—but, rather, to make it clear what an immense advantage the Celt-haters, the negative side, have in the controversy about Celtic antiquity; how much a clear-headed sceptic, like Mr. Nash, may utterly demolish, and, in demolishing, give himself the appearance of having won an entire victory. But an entire victory he has, as I will next proceed to show, by no means won.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Notes on the Cattle Plague.

INTELLIGENT foreigners have observed of us as a nation that though we fail to carry out our precautionary and remedial measures with that admirable and timely precision which is so easy to a despotic government, we attempt a greater number of things, and that if we accomplish them less perfectly, we do, in a fashion, educate ourselves in the process. When our education is complete, we shall, of course, undertake more feats, and perform them better, than any other people. Meanwhile, it may not be amiss to consider how we have dealt with the Cattle Plague which now devastates our land; and though we have not any cure to propose which is the result of our actual experience, it may yet be that by a careful summary of all the views which have been unfolded, and all the propositions that have been ventilated, by pushing them to their logical conclusions, and making that which all sermon-writers know as the "third head, or practical application," something definite and useful may be evolved, if not for the animals, at least for ourselves. Of remedies so called there have been scores announced and sold; but of those absolutely efficacious, so far as is known, not one. Inoculation—the only thing which, short of death, was recommended by old Australian cattle-holders—has been very little tried here, probably because those who advised it admitted that "it caused the tail to swell enormously;" and as we all made up our minds, in the first instance, that every beast attacked must die, we were desirous not needlessly to disfigure him, lest inspectors might challenge the carcase, and people refuse to buy and eat of it. The few large owners of the high-bred short-horns (almost priceless in value) divided their herds into small lots, which were domiciled in different sheds far from the high roads. Each lot had its separate herdsman, whose duty it was to attend exclusively to his own animals, and on no account to approach the others, or to go beyond the boundaries of the farm, or to hold intercourse with other herdsmen, cattle-dealers, or drovers. Any stock sold, as sheep, pigs, &c., were invariably driven into the public road before changing hands; and no animals of any kind were bought or allowed to be domiciled in the farm, whether from infected districts or not. So far these expedients seem to have answered perfectly well. The small farmers and cowkeepers daubed the noses of their beasts with tar, and hung around their necks little bags of camphor or strings of onions, which it is to be supposed would act more as a species of charm than according to any rational theory. In a general way, these men attempted little more; and having done this, they awaited the result, some with confidence, some with fear. As might have been anticipated,

they were heavy sufferers. When the disease once commenced it quickly emptied the sheds and fields, and a week was often sufficient to turn a prosperous cowkeeper into a ruined man. When the cows were visibly affected some gave them salt, others chalybeate waters and quinine; some administered opium and castor-oil, others turpentine and gin; some sulphur and whisky, others mineral acids and creosote; some rubbed them and gave them ginger, others fomented them and gave them globules; some kept them warm, some kept them cold; but all was wildness, terror, and confusion, or blind confidence and final dismay. Nothing seems to have been done on any recognized principle of medical practice. Miss Burdett Coutts loved her flock not wisely, but too well; for so much whisky was administered that several died, not of the disease, but of *delirium tremens*. The teetotal papers have not yet thought fit to improve that occasion; and we make the Alliance company a present of the suggestion, and invite them to supply the omission. The action of the Executive seems to have been, in the first instance, confined to three measures. The Privy Council was summoned to deliberate, a Royal Commission was called into existence, and the Archbishop of Canterbury was ordered to compose a prayer. The results of the cogitations of the Lords in Council were communicated to the expectant world by Mr. Helps. These comprised a list of wearyful and onerous precautions to be observed towards the living, and of more innumerable and mournful duties to be performed in connection with the funeral obsequies, which no one has yet, so far as ordinary observation extends, attempted to carry out in their integrity. As for the animals actually affected, those in the first report my Lords doomed at once—for them there was no hope; all endeavours were to be directed to one final deed, *i.e.* to knock the creature on the head. Smite hip and thigh, slay and spare not, was the advice of the Government, and the practice of the inspectors and veterinary surgeons in the first panic of the plague. Another notable suggestion was that all persons attending diseased cattle should wear a safety dress. It is not needful to describe this dress as elaborately as Mr. Helps was compelled to do; it will be sufficient to say that the man so equipped would in all essential particulars, and certainly in appearance, resemble the diver at the Polytechnic. He was not to see or tend healthy beasts, nor to wander about the roads, nor to touch or associate with his own kind until he had got out of his safety dress, immersed it in disinfectant fluid, and treated his own head, eyes, ears, and such parts of his person as had been necessarily exposed in the same severe manner; and as the dress was to be worn over the usual clothes, the latter were likewise to be taken off and fumigated. It is always well to economize trouble, and the necessity for the last precaution might well have been obviated by the simple plan of the man getting in and out of his safety clothes in the dress with which nature has provided him. Some people thought that by smearing the skin well with oil, absorption and exhalation would be in a great degree checked, and infection thus prevented; but it is clearly better to take advantage of a great

natural law than to provide against its operation. Man is an absorbing and exhaling animal ; and by this perpetual soaking and saturation it was perhaps intended by the authorities that he should be transformed into a living and moving disinfectant, giving off fumes of chlorine gas in all directions ; in fact, a kind of highly-charged vessel, or " head-centre " of health.

The funeral rites were too numerous to detail. The animals were to be buried where they died, and in quick-lime, with all their belongings, except the horns and hoofs. This was misplaced leniency, for the horns, hoofs, and tail are things well known to be typical and suggestive of the embodiment of evil, and therefore ought, more than anything else, to have been buried away out of sight. The droppings of the unfortunate deceased were ordered to be carefully interred where they were dropped, along with the piece of turf which they had defiled, by means of an instrument which, as described, would be a kind of cross between a " spud " and a long gravy-spoon. When this had been thoroughly and exhaustively done in every field, such grass as was bold and ill-advised to grow thereon, was to be formally burned. The quickest plan would have been, no doubt, to have sown the accursed spot with salt, but in the hurry of business, this idea does not seem to have occurred to any one. These recommendations were eventually greatly modified, and indeed were never carried out with any kind of accuracy or unanimity. Otherwise it would have been a singular, and yet a suggestive spectacle, to see the landscape dotted over and our fair fields perambulated by the sombre and careworn figures of the men who, clad in their safety dress, and spud or spoon in hand, would patiently pursue their odoriferous and endless task. There was a cry at one time, that horses, chickens, pigs, and sheep were liable to the disorder, but this gradually died out. It is, however, pretty certain that sheep imbibe and carry about the infection in their wool ; and it was proposed that all dogs should be tied up lest they should become mediums of contagion. This would have rendered necessary an enormous addition to the staff of shepherds and drovers, since, as is well known, a man and his dog can collect and drive more sheep than twenty men without a dog. A flock of sheep driven by a score of men disguised in the safety dress, would have been something to see, besides looking like being thoroughly in earnest. Sheep are notoriously stupid creatures, but a little child was not long since terrified to death by the sight of a surpliced clergyman, and to be pursued by such drovers might drive even sheep into insanity. Another idea ventilated, was to burn bonfires, let off crackers and fireworks, and make much smoke ; it was reported that by these means the cholera had greatly abated at Toulon, Marseilles, &c., acting chiefly, it was supposed, by diverting the minds of the survivors ; and assuming that the cholera and the rinderpest are alike judgments, what would remove one would remove the other. This was a bold adoption of psychological therapeutics, and as such might well be commended for its ingenuity. It has often been asserted that agriculturists, by the force of

association, not only acquire the bovine gaze, but contract the bovine cast of thought; therefore each man would be competent to invent diversions for his own beasts. If any should be at fault, or visibly incompetent to his task, the philanthropists who improvise recreation for the "pet-lambs" of the Home Office ought to be made to assist him. What has been found to amuse the minds of the goats, could hardly fail to afford salutary distraction to the sheep. Up to this point no cures had been effected, hardly any even attempted; there was indiscriminate slaughter on all sides, so that it was computed that more were killed by order of the inspectors, than really perished of actual plague, the deaths from lung-disease being often mistaken for the other. Owing to conflicting circumstances, the Archbishop had not yet composed his prayer, and many people called loudly for a day of fasting and humiliation to be appointed. One writer expressed himself in the papers as follows:—"Like the potato disease, no satisfactory reason, humanly speaking, has been assigned as to the cause of this terrible calamity. It must, I think, be referred to a higher power, and should be regarded as a severe visitation from God." There was about this view one merit, that while we were all free to look upon it as a Divine judgment, we were all equally free to determine as to the person or things who had caused it; and equally sure to ascribe it to those most obnoxious to ourselves. Thus one man imputed it to slavery, another to the consumption of ardent spirits, a third to sabbath-breaking, a fourth to free-trade, a fifth to our persecution of the Pope, a sixth to our flirtation with the same. Orangeism, Fenianism, John Bright, Maynooth, and Earl Russell—all have had their turn, while the more orthodox of the Bishops detected in it the just punishment of the nation which produced Colenso, and of the Privy Council which refused to excommunicate him. Another writer owned that to appoint a fast and day of humiliation might be in the abstract, and *per se*, highly desirable, only he was "afraid that it might be seized upon as a kind of holiday, and thus become to very many an occasion for sin." By this time not one, but many days of fasting and humiliation had come to be inevitable, at least for the poor; the holding of cattle-markets was in various parts prohibited by the authorities (though unfortunately this was not done unanimously), the slaughter was immense both of sound and unsound beasts; and, to be candid, a good deal more of the flesh of the latter has been eaten than people are at all aware of.* There was in many places quite a glut of beef in the market, but though the wholesale price was the same or lower than in 1864, the butchers with cynical shamelessness continued to raise their demands to starvation point.

At length the prayer of his Grace of Canterbury was published. Suggestions, advice, and commentaries respecting it had been already largely poured forth on the subject; some had predicted for it all sorts of one-sidedness and defects, others had questioned the lawfulness of it, but the

* One benevolent man did indeed transform himself into a *corpus vile*, and voluntarily consumed diseased meat, without any evil effects, it is stated.

final unkindness was dealt by those who undertook to describe the painful difficulties and protracted labours which attended its birth, the ruthless cruelties of the surgeons *accoucheurs*, the rough handling of the nurses, and the sufferings of the august and reverent parent condemned to stand in the background, and behold in silent agony the mutilation of his offspring. Foreigners learned not without a certain compassion that *one* Archbishop is first ordered by the Queen to prepare a prayer on a given subject; this done, he is required to submit it for approval to the Lords of the Privy Council: these gentlemen, we are told, commonly make some alteration in it, sufficient at least to maintain their right to alter what they please. It has been said that a member of the Privy Council many years ago, anxious to reassure the minds of those who feared "such Puseyite nonsense as the independence of the Church," remarked that "no one who had ever been present at a meeting of Privy Council and seen the Archbishop stand waiting while the lay members of the Council were reading and altering his prayer, would ever again talk about *that*." The Prayer, after being duly operated on, is sent as it were bleeding from all its wounds to the Queen's printer, and is thence despatched to the parochial clergy, who are ordered to read it aloud in their respective churches, and read it is accordingly. Certainly it seems at first sight strange that, having appointed an Archbishop, and given him a subject for prayer, we yet cannot trust him to compose a fitting form without correction; and no doubt there are those who deem the ungodly creatures and lax theologians to be found in the Privy Council wholly unfit either to suggest or criticize in such matters. But as yet our people prefer to be in bondage to the State rather than to the Bishops, and we like, though indirectly, to have some say as to what we will pray for, and how we will do it.

The poor farmers caught it on all hands. In a paroxysm of terror and for any price they could get, they consigned to the butcher their beasts, fat and lean alike. On the first they had no profit, and on the last a considerable loss; they paid fees to magistrates' clerks and others for permits to travel, to the inspector who first inspected their cows and then condemned them, to the man who killed them, and to the fellow who buried them. One slaughterman was said to have realized 600*l.* in three months. The members of the Cattle Plague Commission sat with great industry on what people irreverently termed addled eggs, and no one was found to admire the result of their hatching. The public was disappointed to observe that as to the origin of the disease, as well as to the mode of dealing with it, these gentlemen were equally divided, and as regarded remedy or curative treatment, they did not, at all events in their first report, even discuss it. The labours of the commissioners are only now beginning to acquire their real value in popular estimation. Unquestionably, had their somewhat timid recommendations been at once carried out, a very different state of things might have been anticipated. On one point they were very strenuous, namely, on the signal injustice of the order which required not only that beasts dying and dead should be slaughtered and

interred, but that all which were attacked, or even supposed to be attacked, should be, without any kind of compensation to the farmer, at once knocked on the head by inspectors, who, newly appointed, and burning to distinguish themselves, had often very hazy views respecting the proper symptoms of genuine rinderpest. That, in the first instance, *doctrinaires* in political economy should on principle object to reimburse the farmer for such of his stock as perished of disease, was to be expected; their theory has proved itself to be an expensive and short-sighted one, but it was at any rate logical and consistent. But when men, suffering already to a large extent, were ordered to sacrifice their property solely for the public good, and were refused liberty to use their skill in the endeavour to save the remnant of their stock, it would be difficult to imagine a case in which compensation for the ceding of rights over property would have been more wisely and justly accorded. Government did indeed accept the principle as laid down by the commissioners, but were more than usually unhappy in their application of it. Like an Irishman of all-work who darts off to carry out the first sentence of an order without tarrying to hear the conclusion, the Lords of the Privy Council were active in precisely the opposite direction of the one intended, and hastened, not to order compensation, but to stay the slaughter, lest compensation should become inevitable. And thus was stamped out, not the Plague, but the chance of extinguishing it. It had been originally ordered that all infected animals dying or slain were to be interred then and there on the spot, and thus to our knowledge it happened that out of six cows belonging to one man, and which died on a Saturday night, five were buried on the Sunday morning in the midst of a crowded district, and surrounded by houses, yards, and courts, swarming with women and children. This piece of hasty legislation had to be annulled, along with one or two other impracticable orders. In several towns the milkmen, envious of the superior opportunities of the butcher, held meetings at which they agreed *nem. con.* to raise the price of milk, and simultaneously to diminish the size of their measures, and though the matter was not openly discussed, there is little doubt that many of them did, in their own minds, propose, second, and carry a resolution to have a more frequent recourse in future to that which is popularly known as the "cow with the iron tail." On the surface the cowkeepers had justice on their side, but it was of a kind more apparent than real, for this reason:—in nine cases out of ten the cowkeeper whose animals caught the disease lost, not one-third or one-half of his stock, but every head that he possessed. His trade was simply gone, and he had no milk, either good or bad, with which to supply his customers, and therefore could not be affected by the increased price of the commodity. Those who continued to supply milk were generally those whose stock had altogether escaped infection. It was they who reaped the profits, and though they had a perfect moral and legal right to do so, it would be a mistake for any one to suppose that by paying the extra price exacted, he was thereby reimbursing the "poor men who had lost their

cattle." It was simply a mode by which those who had been exceptionally fortunate realized in solid cash the benefit of their good luck.

Meanwhile, though the prayer was duly said, the plague was not stayed. "We've gotten t' cattle plague an' it's naw use a praying to kep it fro' oor shores; it 'ud be moor likely if we were to pray to kep it oot of oor parish," said one despairing rustic to another after service on Sunday. It was believed, and there is much reason and evidence to support the assertion, that the Government inspectors were themselves the most active in disseminating the disease, that they went from herd to herd and farm to farm, carrying about with them in their clothes and on their person the infection, that they adopted little or no kind of precaution, and that in some cases the horse they rode, being first tied up in one stable and then another, was a fertile source of infection whenever it approached sound cattle. "If I see one of these Government chaps on my farm I'll shoot him if I hang for it to-morrow," exclaimed one farmer in the extremity of his wrath and terror. It must be borne in mind that these gentlemen, besides their fixed salaries, received their travelling expenses, and were thereby stimulated into unnatural activity, and a large majority imagined that the more they slew, and the greater the quantity of ground they crossed, the greater their merit and vigilance. Perhaps if we had in the first instance besought God for what we should stand the most grievously in need of ultimately, we should have prayed Him to infuse,—

A spirit of courage into the Queen's Ministers, so that they should not continue to behave as if the penalty for failure would be the loss of their heads instead of the loss of their places;

A spirit of unanimity into the commissioners, so that they might neither confound the dull nor anger the wise by reason of the opposite nature of their suggestions;

A spirit of decency into the butchers, so that they might resist the temptation for turning a national calamity into an occasion for wholesale robbery;

A spirit of moderation into the inspectors, so that they might neither infect nor slay more than should be necessary to earn their salaries and extras;

And lastly to send,

A spirit of patience into all men who should be required to have dealings with the above-mentioned persons in whatever capacity.

Meanwhile the authorities on the Continent dealt with the scourge in a widely different manner, and with a success which will be hereafter alluded to.

Before the old year was out it began to be rumoured that the rinderpest was not the rinderpest at all, but malignant smallpox, for which it was reasonable to believe that vaccination was the true and specific remedy. Several eminent authorities were inclined to adopt this theory, and a number of sanguine spirits unhesitatingly proclaimed their con-

version. Mr. Tollemache magnanimously devoted a portion of his stock for the purpose of experiment, and there was a universal rush for vaccine matter, which commodity consequently rose to a premium. Those who sought it went from one institution to another, from the National Vaccine Society to the Small Pox Hospital, from pillar to post, from one doctor to the other, with small success. The very hospital authorities declined to furnish vaccine for cattle, forgetful of the fact that one cow properly vaccinated would afford vaccine matter for twenty other operations within three days. A number of unprincipled scoundrels immediately advertised as true vaccine an abominable compound of irritant drugs, which when introduced into the system did undoubtedly produce a quite useless eruption, sufficient only to add to the wretched animal's discomfort, and also to destroy faith in the so-called remedy. Meanwhile, for once, English people began to wish that they had been treated even as the Irish are; and that the enlightened despotism which then forbade the importation of cattle, and which, had it been more enlightened still, would have forbidden the importation of Fenians likewise, had been also exercised with regard to this country. In vain the leading clubs and societies, the Central Farmers, the Royal Agricultural, and the Smithfield Club, besought the Executive for measures, not only immediate and stringent, but which should be everywhere alike compulsory. Alas! not even from the Vatican could the *non possumus* be uttered with a more plaintive obstinacy than from the English council-chamber. With a singular pusillanimity, Government persisted in declining its proper responsibility, and suffered the burden of authority to be taken up or cast off at will by those on whom it ought never to have been forced. The powers given to the courts of quarter sessions as regards transit, the stoppage of traffic, &c., were entirely optional, and no sort of unanimity in action resulted. In some places fairs and markets were prohibited, in others not. The incorporated market-towns were in all cases a law unto themselves; and Leeds market was continued long after all surrounding fairs were closed, and became naturally a head-centre of infection. In other cases, towns, villages, and even farms, being, as it were, border towns, or lying within two quarter-sessions districts, had the advantage of being subject to two sets of conflicting regulations; and a man might start with some beasts, furnished with a clean bill of health and every requisite permit, and within a couple of miles, or even a couple of hundred yards, find himself where he could neither drive them further nor drive them back, sell them, pasture them, nor slaughter them.* Cattle might be driven along the high-

* A very valuable bull, from the celebrated Warlabay herd, was some time ago despatched into Berwickshire; the Catterick station-master, however, refused to book it further than Newcastle, and when it arrived there, another set of regulations were in force, and a new certificate was requisite. The North-Eastern Company declined to convey it north, unless two farmers of substantial position, living within so many miles, could certify to its health. The farmers were found, but another hitch occurred. They must have known the creature intimately for the space of twenty-eight days, and the bull was, in every sense of the word, a recent acquaintance. It was equally

road to a railway station, but not to a butcher's shop, nor from one farm to another; offal and manure might be carted here, but not there; and an invisible line on the public road was the boundary on one side of which the owner might drive his sheep at pleasure, on the other he would be liable to a heavy fine. It was entirely optional with the railway companies to disinfect their cattle-trucks or otherwise; and the utter fatuity of such regulations as Government had ventured to put forth may be measured by this, that whereas a respectable farmer, giving his proper address, and furnished with a licence for his own district, might be summarily stopped so soon as he overstepped his boundary, there was up to the second week in February nothing which could possibly prevent a perfect stranger from driving his cattle all over the country. A rural policeman might indeed arrest him, but it would be at his peril; he might also ask him questions, equally the stranger might lawfully refuse to answer them. The justices were incessantly occupied in making new orders without repeating the old ones, until some conviction disclosed the fact that the two were in conflict. On an average, fresh instructions were issued once a week. The clerks to the magistrates and farmers were employed, how vainly they best know, in trying to understand or reconcile them. Drovers were brought up and fined in nominal sums, because it was evident that they had acted in an ignorance which their best efforts could not dispel. No two sets of magistrates issued the same orders, no two inspectors gave the same advice; no one could show the boundary lines; and, in general, the justices could never agree as to what their own orders meant, or how they were to be carried out. If Government had tried to bring about a state of things in which concealment of disease, evasion of the law, and every kind of subterfuge, should appear to the stock-holder as his only chance of self-preservation, nothing better calculated for that purpose could have been devised than the present system.

Before January was out it was clear the theory of small-pox was no longer tenable. Several of the vaccinated calves and heifers which Mr. Tollemache had caused to be exposed to infection had died of rinderpest; and Professor McCall, of Glasgow, reported to the *Lancet* that he had vaccinated successfully an animal which had passed through an attack of the plague. This, of course, indicates the absence either of identity or antagonism between cow-pox and rinderpest or plague. Hitherto it had been supposed that sheep, though they could convey infection in their fleece, were not liable themselves to take the disease. But in

useless to send for some of its old friends at Catterick, since they did not live within the limits laid down. The railway authorities besought of the attendant to vacate the horse-box, and take his bull with him; but this request was sturdily refused, and the evil disposition of *Taurus* was too plainly evident for any official to venture to evict him in person. So for ten days the animal lived in the horse-box triumphantly, along with the attendant who administered to its wants; at the end of which time the Company, urged probably by despair, agreed to convey it to its destination, where, in the first instance, the owner refused to receive it, on account of its long detention in a district notoriously plague-stricken.

February, 1865, Inspector Day reported that a large number of sheep on a farm in Yorkshire were dead or dying of the plague. In the first three weeks of February the deaths reported averaged 11,000 per week, representing a loss of something like 300,000*l.*; the country gentlemen grew furious, and farmers were in despair. Meanwhile the plague had been stamped out in France and Prussia by the adoption of stringent measures—closing of the ports, strict isolation, and slaughter of all beasts either infected or which had been exposed to infection, accompanied in all cases by full compensation to the owners. The same thing was done in Belgium; which certainly proves that a strictly constitutional Government can, if it is disposed, deal satisfactorily with this calamity. The total amount expended in compensation did not exceed 12,000*l.* for the three countries. There was a good deal of evasion and irregularity practised in the burying of diseased carcases. The regulation was that they should be placed under at least five feet of earth; occasionally, therefore, it happened that they were put into a hole two feet in depth, and a little conical mound, not quite three feet high, was piled over them. These graves became, of course, centres of infection. The wretched animals suffered many things of divers physicians. A writer in the *Lancet* proposed that variolous matter from the Small-Pox Hospital should be used instead of vaccine lymph for vaccination. The necklaces of onions not having proved sufficiently powerful, a benevolent nobleman (Lord Leigh) recommended the internal administration of a bruised pulp composed of onions, garlic, shalot, assafœtida, and ginger; and it is probable that the amazing nastiness of the mess would of itself inspire the agricultural mind with faith in its healing virtue. The most unkind cut of all was dealt by Ministers, who, when charged in Parliament with having conspicuously failed in their duty with regard to the plague, boldly declared that more than they had done, no mortal man could have accomplished, on account of the wretchedly backward state of public opinion—a statement which, if true, proves either that we are a much more stupid people than we commonly suppose ourselves to be, or that her Majesty's advisers are remarkable for a degree of modesty, self-diffidence, and poverty of spirit, which some would esteem admirable in women, but seems slightly out of place among English legislators and statesmen. Up to this time the duties of fasting, prayer, and humiliation have been pretty evenly divided. The People have fasted, the Clergy have prayed, and the Ministers have humiliated themselves, and been humiliated by others. But at last—when this article is written—we have reason to hope for such energetic measures as are best calculated to overcome the disaster.

Jacques in the Forest.

"I'm thinking she'll no rise for an hour yet." The observation was made by a very strong-minded man—one keenly alive to the value of truth in the matter to which his words related. It was made to an idle man keenly interested in that very matter. It was not his own wife, or my wife, or any one's wife, or indeed anything female of which he spoke. The idle man had made the most strenuous exertions—had indeed put forth a sustained power of which he had no idea, and was at that moment sick even unto death; his heart beat so that every great throb banged through his brain—his body heaved, his eyes swam—hot scalding drops ran down his brow, sweltered over his eyes, sank into the thirsty folds of his garments. Exhausted, panting, he lay extended on the sward, biting in vacuous pain a piece of bulrush, and staring with wide eyeballs at some object straight before him. It was a hot day early in October—the sun wore just the slightest mantle of gauzy clouds, and was all the warmer by reason of the screen. Its diffused white light cast broadly through the sheen, flooded a vast landscape in which there was more water than land to be seen—blue-gray water set in every variety of form among the broad expanse of brown moor, which rolled away on the right to a hazy cloudland where sea and sky blended together, and on the left and everywhere else inland rose in wave-like folds higher and higher till it lapped the base of a shore of mountains seamed with ravines and whitened by water-courses. There was a grand silence afar. But close to the ear there was a gentle music made by a combination of breeze-borne gnats, buzzing daddy-longlegs, and agitated heather-bells which swayed beneath the balmy wind. Now and then a hoarse croak overhead called attention to a black object which flew in graceless mazes through the sky, and down on the ridges below us the chuckling gabble of the cock-grouse provoked an uneasy grunt from the great gillie before me. There were two of us—one a long, thin-legged man, with red hair, grey eyes, red whiskers, blue cheeks, red hands, and purple brow. On his head was a grey cap pulled down over his flapping ears, a grey shooting coat of many pockets pulled up on his shoulders covered the great bands of muscle which held his bones in their iron grasp—a dusky-coloured knickerbocker distended wide apart by his brawny legs lapped across the stout worsted stockings which crept up from his brogues over a hillock of calf. Prone on his face he lay amid the surging heather, his spying glass neatly fixed on a tussock with the end ready to his eye, and one brawny hand placed backwards on the shoulder of his companion. Whether that person has sinew or ham he does not know. He does

know, however, that, if he had, they were not of much use to him, for he gasped and puffed like an overworked steam-engine. As to his attire, it was simply elegant, though it was not of a kind adapted for the streets of a fashionable city. Why should it be? He and his comrade were intent on murder, there, on the hill-side, as ready for a deed of blood as that Menschikoff of whom Mr. Kinglake writes in his beautiful poem called the Crimean War. A double-barrelled rifle lay stript of its cover beneath the carcase of the puffing carl on the left, with its tubes pointed in a line with the telescope of the gaunt red man—but ever and anon as the former essayed to raise his head from the gnat-haunted heather, the gaunt, red man pressed it down again, and in a husky whisper, cautious and guilt-like, said, “Hisht—not yet! not yet!”

We were both together under circumstances of a painful nature. The night before I had gone to sleep—I am the man with the gun—with the full and fell intent of committing the crime, to the scene of which I have brought you. My dreams were light and so was my sleep, and before I had well forgotten, as it seemed to me, the sentences of the novel which swam before my eyes ere I blew out my candle, a red-bearded man by my bedside flashed a light across my face and woke me up to consciousness. “It’s time, major, for ye to be stirrin’, the captain’s at breakfast.” There were the zinc renovator filled with water, shining like a moon under the rays of the candle, on the dark carpet; the greased brogues beside the chair on which were deposited the strata of garments to be worn on that day, the jug of shaving water, and a narrow, pillar-like bar of light, marking the division of the shutters, and justifying the admonitions of the grisly Angus. “Hang that last bumper of claret.” Or could it be the solitary libation of toddy? Or might it be the pipe which wound up a course of cigars? Any way there was a slight feverdom in the blood and on the tongue. But whisk! splash! slush! and slatter! sponge and spring water! stamp, and puff and rub! and in all the glories of the nude Apollo rubescens the vapours of the evening fly away, and the rasp of the razor over the unwonted stubble left by the overthrow of Crimean and Indian crops of beard by Horse Guard regulations offers the last sacrifice to the graces and to comfort. The shutters are thrown open, up goes the window; a crowd of red-wings in the holly-tree are holding council as to their proceedings for the day; already a flock of wood-guests are pouting through the cornfield outside the garden; and the rooks in the grove are taking easy flights, to ascertain if the morning be well-aired enough for their breakfast-gaining forays. A riotous rabbit is frisking on the small lawn, which descends in a slope to the brawling stream, fringed with boulders and dwarf shrubs—terror of far-casting anglers. In the whirling pools one can see the rise of the brown trout and the bold runs of the impetuous salmon as he rushes onwards and upwards from the loch below. At the porch, already equipped with ponderous deer-saddle, stands the shaggy Highland pony. Beside him is the keen-eyed gillie, Rory Grant, with his brace of mongrel-looking greyhounds in the

leash, quivering and whimpering in the cold. All else is shrouded in a white, sheet-like cloud. But there are mountains all around; for our dear little lodge—(O Farquhar of Moneypenny, how *can* you ask such infernal rents—and get them?)—our dear little lodge is situated in the midst of Strathbagpipe, by the side of Haultfishfag, with Torriebaccagh on one side and Draincanagen on the other, so that the mist likes the locality, and lies there on a fair resting-ground till late in the day at times. It is not far from our bed-room to the dining-room—a circumstance more valuable and appreciated at night than in the early morning; and so ere half an hour has elapsed the person who has been spoken of is seated at the board, which is still illuminated by candles, and is surveying, in comprehensive view, a dish of kipper salmon, each section wrapped in snowy paper, just embrowned at the edges, and speckled with fish fat—a dish of Loch Fynes; a dish of hashed grouse; a smoking glory of red-deer venison collops; an expanse of poached eggs spread over the red ham, as snow-wreaths lie on the moor hillocks; jam and marmalade in enamelled columns; ewers of milk and cream; mounds of various cake, sauces, and bread; a loch of porridge, and a mountain of toast; a hissing urn, and a glowing fount of tea. The captain has gone off—a lunk, sleepless, lean, conspirator of a man, to the manner born—early afoot ever, and late to bed, always to be marked in his ways by a grey fume of tobacco-smoke—a very Stromboli of smokers; kilt-wearing, light-bonneted, scar-legged. “Off-an’-away a gude half hour with McAlister to Glenfunaben,” my gillie tells me. “I’m ready now.” “Skreek! fis-s-s.” That is my vesuvian, as I strike my light at the hall-door, and take my first mouthful of the heavenly azure, slightly flavoured with Havannah. The “pony Jane” sighs as she views the bulk of the grand man who approaches; the dogs whimper, the gillie gives me the compliments of the early morning. Then out comes the man with sandwiches, the “men’s dinners,” as they are called; a bottle of cold tea, a flask of something more exciting and less wholesome.—The capacious game-bag swallows them all up. The pony Jane gives a tremendous humph and grunt of disgust as the person alluded to gets “a leg-up,” and is deposited in the saddle. The red man shoulders the macintosh-guarded rifle, lights his pipe, and steps on ahead with that easy, light-toed, heelless step which has taken these mountain men up many a smoke-wreathed hill slope, and can never be stopped but by the leaden or iron messenger which carries his special billet. The gillie and the dogs follow, and down the gravelled avenue we troop on our errand.

The sun has just climbed—I would write *clombe* an I dared—up the side of a grey barrier which has fenced in the darkness all night long, and he is now sending out his scouts to search for the mountain-tops—right through the columns of cloud which have lain over the valleys and straths, the glens and the corries. ’Tis a lovely sight to see these ever-growing islands rise in sharp outlines, from the obscure, and spread into orange-tinged undulations across the cold sea of the morning!

But we press on—our poetical sentiments evaporate in hard marching on the hard high-road and in the tramp of the pony's hoofs as he presses on after the stalwart stalkers with his fardel of flesh, pipe-smoking, and shivering on his cold saddle. No word is spoken. It is too cold for talking even for those who walk, and the equestrian is lost in considering how it is that the toes can administer such exceeding pain to all the body corporate under the influences of deficient circulation. At every turn in the white road which winds on and up and down and sideways over hillside by tarn, past burn, and over stream, the edges of the mountains which surround us vary in shape and hue, the light grows so strong at last that Angus's crisp red curls light up his bonnet-flaps like the flame of a candle flicking from under an extinguisher. There he plods on, broad-backed, round-shouldered, narrow-waisted, lean-hipped, light-legged, clad in Saxon-cut shooting-coat and vest, and knickerbocker, in Highland hose and shoon, bearing the waterproof-cased rifle on his shoulders, whilst the gillie with the dogs straining on the leash, keeps step beside him and exchanges horrid converse in floods of low guttural Gaelic, intermittent with puffs of smoke from ancient cutty pipes. And as we tramp along there comes from a ravine near at hand a sound hoarser than the never-ending cry of the waters which rush in unseen depths towards the sea, and a raven scenting death within the iron tubes calls to his wife below, and claps the deep leaden hill-side with his heavy wing till his mate joins him, when they rise higher and higher, and take their way to the corrie in front of us. It is a six-mile tramp along the hard-high road. The sun as it climbs from ridge to ridge loses its strength in the lap of the cold clouds. It lightens up range upon range of rugged rock till from the high level of the road we look on either side and behold a tumultuous sea of granite and slate fixed for ever in angry crest and overhanging ridges above the valley of purple heather and green marsh. A bitter wind sweeps over them, but spends its rage in vain on all save my miserable legs and on Brahan and Oscar, who cringe behind the gillie's legs. The fizz of another vesuvian was only an incident in this journey of an hour and a half. At last the road turning abruptly over the ravine, mounted more steeply and pierced the moor, which lapping it with a fringe of heather receded in brown folds higher and higher till it reached the base of the first rocky shore whence the deer forest swept round to meet the rays of the morning sun.

Angus halted—took his telescope from the cover, and looking round for a stone to prop his back against, lay down with his legs stretched out, and his elbow resting on one knee to support the glass, with which he proceeded to make a deliberate survey of the hill-side. What a blessing that was—with what a rapturous sough I threw myself down on the heather; for the steady, long stride of these hill-men is trying to unaccustomed legs. Each tussock seems to rise against the feet, and every heather-covered hump throws out its arms to impede the labouring ankle; the hill-side, which from the distance seemed an easy slope, grows into a

steep lung-testing ascent, the water-courses swell into streams, the very stones live and move under his uncertain steps. "Whew! how hot it is!" "Ye'd better not make a noise in the forest," quoth the red man. Ugh! ugh! ugh! rings out a sharp sultry cough. The red man looks round with an air of pity and despair which says plainly, "If you do that again, we may as well turn back." Joy then at the halt and the repose. For a time I hear nothing but the bumping of my own heart. Then I become aware of the fact that I am very high up; and the lodge is glistening like a snow-drop in the trees far below. Next I perceive that Angus has removed his eye from the telescope, and is looking at me without saying a word. "Did you see anything?" A nod. "What is it?" "It's a good peest enough. It's a goot stag, and three heends. But thee're a long way. And it's a difficult staak, I'm thinkin'." "Let me see them." "Do you see ta pig white staan by ta green spot, just unter ta cairn over ta burn? There it is—a keetle more to ta left?" "I see it." "Well, ta stag is lying down under ta staan, and the heends is standing up below him feeding." I look, I stare, I squint: use right eye, left eye, both eyes. O, Lynceus, aid me! "I can't see anything, Angus." "Hah, sir, yer not lookin' in ta reet dareckshun at all; it's a hundret yarts to ta left of ta cairn." Steady, sedulous sweeping of the whole area. At last "I see three reddish specks below the white rock." "That's ta heends." "And I see now a big dark speck close to the corrie." "Tat's ta stag." "How do you know?" "I see his horns; it's a goot peest." I should have liked very much to have then and there denounced Angus as a sayer of the thing that was not, but controlled the impulse. Then came another pause. "It's a vara difficult corrie to get till with the weend in this airt," quoth Angus. And then to my indignation he stood up, "What the deuce are you at? Why, they'll be off!" "Heck, major, they're two mile away, and the peests have not got spying-glasses." Angus picked a piece of the fluffy wool of his coat, held it between his fingers, let it go and watched it as it floated away to leeward. "We must just chance it, major. The wind is vara bad for us; it's a long, long staak." There was a click, click, click as Angus put up his telescope, put it into the case, looked all round, and then to my intense surprise, without a word, turned down the hill and proceeded with long bounding steps to take the direction from which we had come. A rest at full length, despite the gnats, on a natural bed of heather gives a false feeling of strength to the inexperienced southerner. There is also great ease at first in a descent, and so I, the major, striding grandly from tuft to tuft, splashing into soft places, lighting agilely on boulders, for some time imagined that going down hill was a pleasant unfatiguing operation, in which the master was as good as his man. But no one ever saw such a hill. The more one went down it the more it lengthened on and on, and when the ridge which seemed to bound the descent by a wide plain of moor was reached, lo! it was but a vantage ground for a fresh humilior. The heather became contrary and pugnacious, the boulders grew unsteady and uncertain; an unaccount-

able tendency to slipping and stumbling forwards and backwards, and sideways, began to manifest itself, and at last there was a quivering of the knee, and a sort of shock to the brain which made the eyes dance at every step. It was with a sensation of much relief I beheld Angus halt once more, heard the click of the telescope, threw myself down on the turf whilst he reconnoitred, and watched him surveying the ground, and now and then picking a piece of fluff from his jacket, and letting it float down the wind. They were there yet, he said, the stag now standing up, and one of the hinds was near him; the others were invisible, and although we had come a long way from our original halting-place, our course had been oblique, so that we were now more directly beneath them. "We must just staak them up ta burn," quoth Angus. On our right a brook which came down the hill now in swift runs amid conglomerate rocks and slabs of slate, now in falls which made music in the morning air, then in deep trench-like streaks marked by bright green verdure, formed a series of pools, which were joined one to another by tiny cascades. Angus turned aside, and putting up his glass, made for the border of the burn, up which he ascended, indifferent to the choice of stone, moss, or water for his steps. I followed; it was well enough, or bad enough as long as we walked. But on reaching a wall-like barrier of slate, over which the burn leaped in a brisk foaming fall, Angus took a long look with the glass. "We must creep now; keep close, and get as near to me as you can, sir." In half an hour more, I had reason to understand the full terror of the curse on the serpent—"On thy belly shalt thou go," a dreadful judgment truly!—my knees were filled with the sharp ends of burnt heather, my arms up to the elbows were buried in black peat, now and then the burn had literally made a bed of me and run over my back, and all this time Angus, with one strong hand kept me close up to him, whilst the whole of my experience of the world was limited to a remarkably close view of the curious workmanship exhibited by the seat of his breeks. Many a rent made by some envious Casca of a thorn or rock, had been the subject of cunning reparation and clever handiwork, but after a while the contemplation of such excellence became monotonous. There was no help for it, however. At every movement to get away Angus was alert. "Keep down, sir, keep down! She'll see ye. Keep as close as ye can by me." Why did I ever come out to shoot deer? Why was I made the sport of this lungless, iron-sinewed Celt? "I must stop. I'm quite blown." "Ah, well! an ye must, ye must. But I'm thinking they'll not be long staying in that corrie. And it's a grand peest indeed, all out." So on again. What odd things came into my head, as I was pursuing the seat of Angus's trousers! I thought of Grisi the first time I saw her in *Norma*. I thought of crouching in a salt marsh off Yenikale, from a pack of rascally Cossacks; an ascent of a flight of steps from one of the London Dock wine-caves also came into my head, so did a clamber up the Jardin de Glace. A grand scene in *Timour the Tartar*,—the water-pipes bursting in my chambers after a thaw, a boyau in

the Crimean trenches, and a semi-maniacal jumble of all things incongruous, held in solution by a violent perspiration; a bumping pulse, and legs which felt anguished to marrowy softness, completed my sensations. What joy when Angus drew a long siffling breath, and with one great wriggle, lay flat and still, with his head raised just an inch above the heather, amid a gathering of small stones by the side of the burn. "They're all there," he whispered just before. "They're all lying town. The stag's about 120 yards off, but there's a peest of a hind between us." And then, keeping his hand on my head, he drew me softly up beside him, and pointed with his eyes and chin through the heather. I looked, but the scalding tears of perspiration ran into my eyes, and all I saw was a couple of watery moons dancing in the sky. "The stag has his horns just above the red staan, and you can see the tips of the heend's ears moving backwards and forwards above that green tuft in front of my finger. The other heends are down beyond the stag!" At last the mist cleared away from my sight, and I beheld two withered branches, russet-red and grey, close by the stone. As I looked they moved, and my heart, which had been bumping before, came to attention with a bang, and then fired a volley of musketry. "What a head! Give me the rifle!" "And it's a fine head indeed; but ye mustn't touch the rifle yet—she'll be risin' py-and-py."

And thus it is that I arrive at the opening words of this slight sketch. For after a long sufferance in which I endured all the agonies of midge and gnat—worse, as Mr. Gould will tell you, than the mosquito of the East—and the still greater torture of being obliged to remain perfectly still under them, Angus arrived at the dread conclusion that I must endure still more till it pleased the creature to rise. Now, the provoking thing was this, that whereas if I were a free agent I would have gone away that instant and fled from the gauzy cloud of persecutors which enveloped me; the stag, quite as much vexed by them, and being quite a voluntary agent, lay there, though he could have gone away in a moment if he had so listed. Perhaps he was a philosopher, and reasoned on the impolicy of waste of power in going to some other place where he would be just as badly off. So we waited together—I watched the flicking of his long ears, and the taperings of his horns till the heather seemed to grow into the landscape, and horns, ears, and heather all blended into a brown hazy agitation. I cannot tell how long this lasted—but my thoughts were wandering far away, and as my eye wandered too, more slowly from one vast hill-side to the other, and idly scanned the wavelike ridges, I thought of the time when the silent glades and valleys were peopled by thousands of stalwart kernes, and when the lowing of cattle leaped from hillock to hillock. They are all gone now. Nothing remains of them in their own land but the stone-heaps which mark the ruins of their uncouth dwellings. And it is well for them. In far lands they became freemen, and ate their bread in peace. Their children are the stirring, sterling, thriving denizens of prosperous cities and the lords of great domains

held in fee simple from nature. From Strathbinkie and Glenbunkie in the days now not much more than a century old, two thousand three hundred men, with claymore and target, and a few miserable firelocks, followed the drunken, cursing, dicing, red-nosed, swaggering Lord Haddie, of Haddie, to be cut down and shot down, and deserted and transported. Over all that expanse a search-warrant backed by a microscope could only to-day have found Angus, the captain, myself, the gillie with the pony, the folks at the lodge, and some four or five families of stalkers, keepers, and the like. Haddie's race has long since died out, and his title serves to grace the roll of names which follow the southern honours of a Saxon duke. But the MacHaddies of Glen and Strath have spread over Canada, New Zealand, Australia—the isles of the sea, and the broad lands of the Far West. They will not have our convicts, and they will not have the aborigines; and lost in democratic whirls of independent self-satisfying existence, they have no respect for titles. No doubt, they are better and happier far than they would have been had their ancestors never dared the sea. Let us hope so, at all events.

But what is to be the end of the Highlands of Scotland? I don't mean to inquire if Cape Wrath be likely to migrate or not. Nor is there any reason to believe in a great geographical change, or in a Murchisonian geological convulsion. But I am much mistaken if there is not some daily cataclysm going on in those pleasant places which lie between the Minch and the German Ocean from west to east, and from Perthshire and Argyshire to Caithness and Sutherland from south to north. It is all a game of mammon against mankind, of sport and sheep, of salmon, grouse, and venison, against the aborigines. Once on a time a great Scotchman, Sir William Dunbar, with that fervid energy in bull-making which distinguishes all Celts condemned, instead of Gaelic or Erse, to use the obscure and inelegant Latin-Norman-Saxon called English, in proposing the health of the chairman of the Hudson's Bay Company, expressed a fervent wish that the said chairman "might long live to be what he ever had been"—(what was it? what could it be?)—"the *father* of the *aborigines* of Hudson's Bay." The poor Highlanders aboriginal want a father very badly, and may, for all I see, continue to want one; but it is evident they are losing the game at home. A short time ago a gallant gentleman, interested in a Highland regiment, expressed his surprise and regret to an old man of the mountains respecting the paucity of recruits for his corps in places once famous for fecundity. "Ah, well! Stratherrombie," quoth the ancient, "ye see it's just the change in the nature of the beast. If ye go up Glengarry and Glengarich, and round by Strathcairn, ye'll find recruits as many as ever, but they have all got horns on their heads." There is no use, we are told, in a maudlin sentimentalism on these matters. Races as brave as the old Celtic populations of the Highlands have died out thus. Emigration is the recognized remedy of the miserable Sangrados of the new school of political medicine-men, who can't deal with a full pulse and charged circulation

except by recourse to depletion. Not a doubt about it, but Sawney Bean's great-grandson who is running for a senatorship in Iowa, or Glenruin's grandson who is a member of council in Queensland, is much better off than if he were living in settled humanities in the finest scenery in the world, or were leading dhuinewassels to the sack of Tullochgorum. So far of the man himself. But as to the nation from which he came, what? Admit that it was not good for Sawney Bean to be forced to eat human mutton or beef, whatever the pachydermatous meat may have been—concede that it was wrong in Glenruin to have a feud with Stratherrombie—we still must feel that Sawney Bean and Glenruin would have been more effective and forcible fighters against the great Gaul or Samuel of the U.S. than the largest flock of sheep and the best head now to be found south of John of Groat's. And so—here I felt my elbow nudged, and turning my head towards Angus saw that his eyes were fixed right before him and turned slightly upwards, whilst the rifle was slid gently through the heather to my right hand. I looked forward and there—standing upright, with horns slightly thrown back, ears erect, dilated nostril sniffing upwards, fore legs set stiffly together and huge body thrown on the massive haunches ready for a bound, whilst the hinds stamped and grunted in the heather—stood the object of all my toils. "Aim low!" whispered Angus, as I unstopped the hammer. How the bead on the rifle barrel rose and fell, now bounding as it seemed into the air, now sinking below the whitish line beneath the stag's shoulders! And how long the second seemed ere the thin smoke clinging to the heather was swept back on my face! My eyes were blinded with the heavy drops which rolled off my brow, and as I started to my feet I caught as through a driving rain the forms of the deer bounding, leaping, flying ever up the hill. A deep despair chilled the throbbings of my heart. "I've missed after all!" "Missed!" quoth Angus, who was running toward the little hillock on which the stag had been standing. "An' if ye call that missing, I'd leek to see ye hitting. I heard the bullet strike him, an' he's not far off." In another minute I stood over the dying stag, Angus stripping off his coat and baring his brawny arm, laid his knife in the grass, and standing across "ta peest," handed me a gurgle of Glenlivet. "An' inteet 'twas a goot shot. An' it's a fine peest, petter than I thoet. It 'ill be nearer eighteen than seffenteen stone. An' a royal heed too."

Hurrah for deer-stalking! Hurrah for the forest!

And yet I felt like a cowardly sneaking murderer as I lumbered down the hill-side, whilst by my heels puffed the pony carrying the dead deer which kept nodding his head at every step, and staring at me with his dull, wide open eye. "An' inteet 'twas a goot shot," said Angus, again. "An' I always feel as pleased as if I had five pound when a teer is killed so weel as that." It was all the man had a care or thought for. I would have given much more not to have killed it at all.

Armadale.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

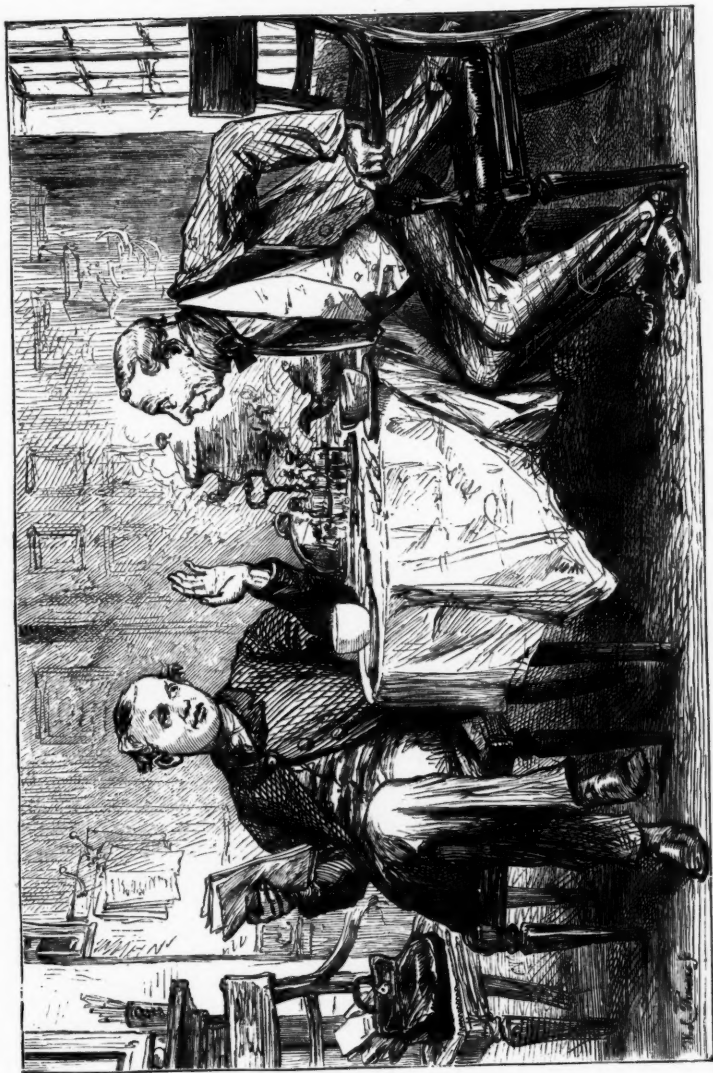
CHAPTER XV.

THE WEDDING DAY

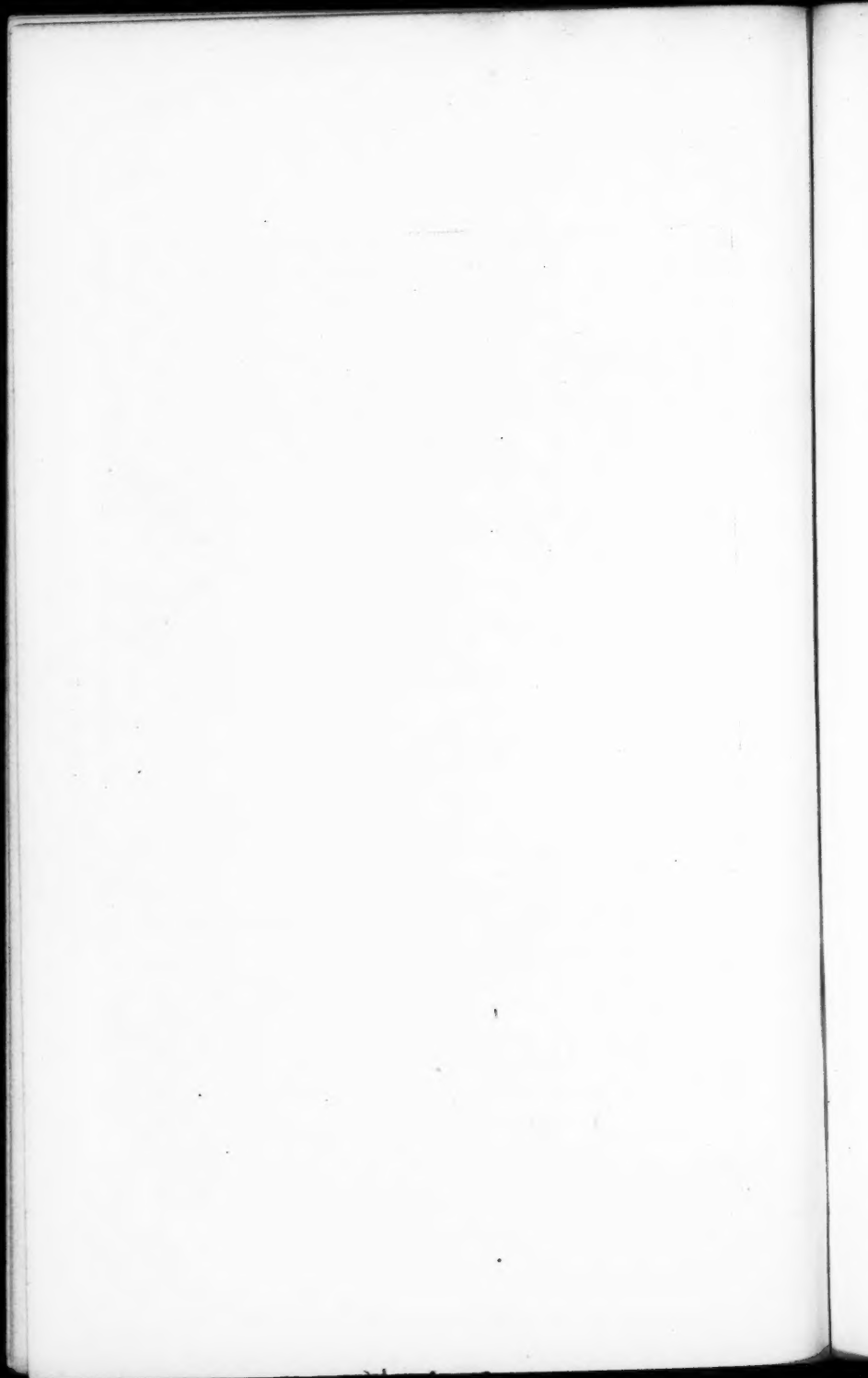


HE time was nine o'clock in the morning. The place was a private room in one of the old-fashioned inns, which still remain on the Borough side of the Thames. The date was Monday, the 11th of August. And the person was Mr. Bashwood, who had travelled to London on a summons from his son, and had taken up his abode at the inn, on the previous day.

He had never yet looked so pitifully old and helpless as he looked now. The fever and chill of alternating hope and despair, had dried and withered and wasted him. The angles of his figure had sharpened. The outline of his face had shrunk. His dress pointed the melancholy change in him, with a merciless and shocking emphasis. Never, even in his youth, had he worn such clothes as he wore now. With the desperate resolution to leave no chance untried of producing an impression on Miss Gwilt, he had cast aside his dreary black garments; he had even mustered the courage to wear his blue satin cravat. His coat was a riding coat of light grey. He had ordered it, with a vindictive subtlety of purpose, to be made on the pattern of a coat that he had seen Allan wear. His waistcoat was white; his trousers were of the gayest summer pattern, in the largest check. His wig was oiled and scented, and brushed round, on either side, to hide the wrinkles on his temples. He was an object to laugh at—he was an object to weep over. His enemies, if a creature so wretched could have had enemies, would have



FATHER AND SON.



forgiven him, on seeing him in his new dress. His friends—had any of his friends been left—would have been less distressed if they had looked at him in his coffin, than if they had looked at him as he was now. Incessantly restless, he paced the room from end to end. Now he looked at his watch; now he looked out of window; now he looked at the well-furnished breakfast-table—always with the same wistful uneasy inquiry in his eyes. The waiter coming in, with the urn of boiling water, was addressed for the fiftieth time in the one form of words which the miserable creature seemed to be capable of uttering that morning,—“My son is coming to breakfast. My son is very particular. I want everything of the best—hot things, and cold things—and tea and coffee—and all the rest of it, waiter; all the rest of it.” For the fiftieth time, he now reiterated those anxious words. For the fiftieth time, the impatient waiter had just returned his one pacifying answer,—“All right, sir; you may leave it to me”—when the sound of leisurely footsteps was heard on the stairs; the door opened; and the long-expected son sauntered indolently into the room, with a neat little black-leather bag in his hand.

“Well done, old gentleman!” said Bashwood the younger, surveying his father’s dress with a smile of sardonic encouragement. “You’re ready to be married to Miss Gwilt at a moment’s notice!”

The father took the son’s hand, and tried to echo the son’s laugh.

“You have such good spirits, Jemmy,” he said, using the name in its familiar form, as he had been accustomed to use it, in happier days. “You always had good spirits, my dear, from a child. Come and sit down; I’ve ordered you a nice breakfast. Everything of the best! everything of the best! What a relief it is to see you! Oh, dear, dear, what a relief it is to see you.” He stopped and sat down at the table—his face flushed with the effort to control the impatience that was devouring him. “Tell me about her!” he burst out, giving up the effort with a sudden self-abandonment. “I shall die, Jemmy, if I wait for it any longer. Tell me! tell me! tell me!”

“One thing at a time,” said Bashwood the younger, perfectly unmoved by his father’s impatience. “We’ll try the breakfast first, and come to the lady afterwards? Gently does it, old gentleman—gently does it!”

He put his leather bag on a chair, and sat down opposite to his father, composed, and smiling, and humming a little tune.

No ordinary observation, applying the ordinary rules of analysis, would have detected the character of Bashwood the younger in his face. His youthful look, aided by his light hair, and his plump beardless cheeks; his easy manner, and his ever ready smile; his eyes which met unshrinkingly the eyes of every one whom he addressed, all combined to make the impression of him a favourable impression in the general mind. No eye for reading character, but such an eye as belongs to one person, perhaps, in ten thousand, could have penetrated the smoothly-deceptive surface of this man, and have seen him for what he really was—the vile

creature whom the viler need of Society has fashioned for its own use. There he sat—the Confidential Spy of modern times, whose business is steadily enlarging, whose Private Inquiry Offices are steadily on the increase. There he sat—the necessary Detective attendant on the progress of our national civilization; a man who was in this instance at least, the legitimate and intelligible product of the vocation that employed him; a man professionally ready on the merest suspicion (if the merest suspicion paid him) to get under our beds, and to look through gimlet-holes in our doors; a man who would have been useless to his employers if he could have felt a touch of human sympathy in his father's presence; and who would have deservedly forfeited his situation, if, under any circumstances whatever, he had been personally accessible to a sense of pity or a sense of shame.

"Gently does it, old gentleman," he repeated, lifting the covers from the dishes, and looking under them one after the other all round the table. "Gently does it!"

"Don't be angry with me, Jemmy," pleaded his father. "Try, if you can, to think how anxious I must be. I got your letter as long ago as yesterday morning. I have had to travel all the way from Thorpe-Ambrose,—I have had to get through the dreadful long evening, and the dreadful long night—with your letter telling me that you had found out who she is, and telling me nothing more. Suspense is very hard to bear, Jemmy, when you come to my age. What was it prevented you, my dear, from coming to me when I got here yesterday evening?"

"A little dinner at Richmond," said Bashwood the younger. "Give me some tea."

Mr. Bashwood tried to comply with the request; but the hand with which he lifted the teapot trembled so unmanageably that the tea missed the cup and streamed out on the cloth. "I'm very sorry; I can't help trembling when I'm anxious," said the old man, as his son took the teapot out of his hand. "I'm afraid you bear me malice, Jemmy, for what happened when I was last in town. I own I was obstinate and unreasonable about going back to Thorpe-Ambrose. I'm more sensible now. You were quite right in taking it all on yourself, as soon as I showed you the veiled lady, when we saw her come out of the hotel; and you were quite right to send me back the same day to my business in the steward's office at the Great House." He watched the effect of these concessions on his son, and ventured doubtfully on another entreaty. "If you won't tell me anything else just yet," he said, faintly, "will you tell me how you found her out? Do, Jemmy,—do!"

Bashwood the younger looked up from his plate. "I'll tell you that," he said. "The reckoning up of Miss Gwilt has cost more money and taken more time than I expected; and the sooner we come to a settlement about it, the sooner we shall get to what you want to know."

Without a word of expostulation, the father laid his dingy old pocket-book and his purse on the table before the son. Bashwood the younger

looked into the purse; observed, with a contemptuous elevation of the eyebrows, that it held no more than a sovereign and some silver; and returned it intact. The pocket-book, on being opened next, proved to contain four five-pound notes. Bashwood the younger transferred three of the notes to his own keeping; and handed the pocket-book back to his father, with a bow expressive of mock gratitude, and sarcastic respect.

"A thousand thanks," he said. "Some of it is for the people at our office, and the balance is for myself. One of the few stupid things, my dear sir, that I have done in the course of my life, was to write you word when you first consulted me, that you might have my services gratis. As you see, I hasten to repair the error. An hour or two at odd times, I was ready enough to give you. But this business has taken days, and has got in the way of other jobs. I told you I couldn't be out of pocket by you—I put it in my letter, as plain as words could say it."

"Yes, yes, Jemmy. I don't complain, my dear, I don't complain. Never mind the money—tell me how you found her out."

"Besides," pursued Bashwood the younger, proceeding impenetrably with his justification of himself, "I have given you the benefit of my experience—I've done it cheap. It would have cost double the money, if another man had taken this in hand. Another man would have kept a watch on Mr. Armadale as well as Miss Gwilt. I have saved you that expense. You are certain that Mr. Armadale is bent on marrying her. Very good. In that case, while we have our eye on *her*, we have, for all useful purposes, got our eye on *him*. Know where the lady is, and you know that the gentleman can't be far off."

"Quite true, Jemmy. But how was it Miss Gwilt came to give you so much trouble?"

"She's a devilish clever woman," said Bashwood the younger; "that's how it was. She gave us the slip at a milliner's shop. We made it all right with the milliner, and speculated on the chance of her coming back to try on a gown she had ordered. The cleverest women lose the use of their wits in nine cases out of ten, where there's a new dress in the case—and even Miss Gwilt was rash enough to go back. That was all we wanted. One of the women from our office helped to try on her new gown, and put her in the right position to be seen by one of our men behind the door. He instantly suspected who she was, on the strength of what he had been told of her—for she's a famous woman in her way. Of course, we didn't trust to that. We traced her to her new address; and we got a man from Scotland Yard, who was certain to know her, if our own man's idea was the right one. The man from Scotland Yard turned milliner's lad for the occasion, and took her gown home. He saw her in the passage, and identified her in an instant. You're in luck, I can tell you. Miss Gwilt's a public character. If we had had a less notorious woman to deal with, she might have cost us weeks of inquiry, and you might have had to pay hundreds of pounds. A day did it in Miss Gwilt's case; and another day put the whole story of her life, in black and white,

into my hands. There it is at the present moment, old gentleman, in my black bag."

Bashwood the father made straight for the bag with eager eyes, and outstretched hand. Bashwood the son took a little key out of his waistcoat pocket—winked—shook his head—and put the key back again.

"I hav'n't done breakfast yet," he said. "Gently does it, my dear sir—gently does it."

"I can't wait!" cried the old man, struggling vainly to preserve his self-control. "It's past nine! It's a fortnight to-day, since she went to London with Mr. Armadale! She may be married to him in a fortnight! She may be married to him this morning! I can't wait! I can't wait!"

"There's no knowing what you can do till you try," rejoined Bashwood the younger. "Try; and you'll find you *can* wait. What has become of your curiosity?" he went on, feeding the fire ingeniously with a stick at a time. "Why don't you ask me what I mean by calling Miss Gwilt a public character? Why don't you wonder how I came to lay my hand on the story of her life, in black and white? If you'll sit down again, I'll tell you. If you won't, I shall confine myself to my breakfast."

Mr. Bashwood sighed heavily, and went back to his chair.

"I wish you were not so fond of your joke, Jemmy," he said; "I wish, my dear, you were not quite so fond of your joke."

"Joke?" repeated his son. "It would be serious enough in some people's eyes, I can tell you. Miss Gwilt has been tried for her life; and the papers in that black bag are the lawyer's instructions for the Defence. Do you call that a joke?"

The father started to his feet, and looked straight across the table at the son with a smile of exultation that was terrible to see.

"She's been tried for her life!" he burst out, with a deep gasp of satisfaction. "She's been tried for her life!" He broke into a low prolonged laugh, and snapped his fingers exultingly. "Aha-ha-ha! Something to frighten Mr. Armadale in *that*!"

Scoundrel as he was, the son was daunted by the explosion of pent-up passion which burst on him in those words.

"Don't excite yourself," he said, with a sullen suppression of the mocking manner in which he had spoken thus far.

Mr. Bashwood sat down again, and passed his handkerchief over his forehead. "No," he said, nodding and smiling at his son. "No, no—no excitement, as you say—I can wait now, Jemmy; I can wait now."

He waited with immovable patience. At intervals, he nodded, and smiled, and whispered to himself, "Something to frighten Mr. Armadale in *that*!" But he made no further attempt, by word, look, or action to hurry his son.

Bashwood the younger finished his breakfast slowly, out of pure bravado; lit a cigar, with the utmost deliberation; looked at his father, and, seeing him still as immovably patient as ever, opened the black bag at last, and spread the papers on the table.

"How will you have it?" he asked. "Long or short? I have got her whole life here. The counsel who defended her at the trial was instructed to hammer hard at the sympathies of the jury: he went head over ears into the miseries of her past career, and shocked everybody in court in the most workmanlike manner. Shall I take the same line? Do you want to know all about her, from the time when she was in short frocks and frilled trousers? or do you prefer getting on at once to her first appearance as a prisoner in the dock?"

"I want to know all about her," said his father eagerly. "The worst, and the best—the worst, particularly. Don't spare my feelings, Jemmy—whatever you do, don't spare my feelings! Can't I look at the papers myself?"

"No, you can't. They would be all Greek and Hebrew to you. Thank your stars that you have got a sharp son, who can take the pith out of these papers, and give it a smack of the right flavour in serving it up. There are not ten men in England who could tell you this woman's story as I can tell it. It's a gift, old gentleman, of the sort that is given to very few people—and it lodges here."

He tapped his forehead smartly, and turned to the first page of the manuscript before him, with an unconcealed triumph at the prospect of exhibiting his own cleverness, which was the first expression of a genuine feeling of any sort that had escaped him yet.

"Miss Gwilt's story begins," said Bashwood the younger, "in the market-place at Thorpe-Ambrose. One day, something like a quarter of a century ago, a travelling quack-doctor, who dealt in perfumery as well as medicines, came to the town, with his cart, and exhibited, as a living example of the excellence of his washes and hair-oils and so on, a pretty little girl, with a beautiful complexion and wonderful hair. His name was Oldershaw. He had a wife, who helped him in the perfumery part of his business, and who carried it on by herself after his death. She has risen in the world of late years; and she is identical with that sly old lady who employed me professionally a short time since. As for the pretty little girl, you know who she was as well as I do. While the quack was haranguing the mob, and showing them the child's hair, a young lady, driving through the market-place, stopped her carriage to hear what it was all about; saw the little girl; and took a violent fancy to her on the spot. The young lady was the daughter of Mr. Blanchard, of Thorpe-Ambrose. She went home, and interested her father in the fate of the innocent little victim of the quack doctor. The same evening, the Oldershaws were sent for to the great house, and were questioned. They declared themselves to be her uncle and aunt—a lie, of course!—and they were quite willing to let her attend the village school, while they stayed at Thorpe-Ambrose, when the proposal was made to them. The new arrangement was carried out the next day. And the day after that, the Oldershaws had disappeared, and had left the little girl on the

squire's hands ! She evidently hadn't answered as they expected in the capacity of an advertisement—and that was the way they took of providing for her for life. There is the first act of the play for you ! Clear enough, so far, isn't it ? ”

“ Clear enough, Jemmy, to clever people. But I'm old and slow. I don't understand one thing. Whose child was she ? ”

“ A very sensible question. Sorry to inform you that nobody can answer it—Miss Gwilt herself included. These Instructions that I'm referring to are founded, of course, on her own statements, sifted by her attorney. All she could remember, on being questioned, was, that she was beaten and half starved, somewhere in the country, by a woman who took in children at nurse. The woman had a card with her, stating that her name was Lydia Gwilt, and got a yearly allowance for taking care of her (paid through a lawyer), till she was eight years old. At that time, the allowance stopped; the lawyer had no explanation to offer; nobody came to look after her; nobody wrote. The Oldershaws saw her, and thought she might answer to exhibit; and the woman parted with her for a trifle to the Oldershaws; and the Oldershaws parted with her for good and all to the Blanchards. That's the story of her birth, parentage, and education ! She may be the daughter of a Duke, or the daughter of a costermonger. The circumstances may be highly romantic, or utterly commonplace. Fancy anything you like—there's nothing to stop you. When you've had your fancy out, say the word, and I'll turn over the leaves and go on.”

“ Please to go on, Jemmy—please to go on.”

“ The next glimpse of Miss Gwilt,” resumed Bashwood the younger, turning over the papers, “ is a glimpse at a family mystery. The deserted child was in luck's way at last. She had taken the fancy of an amiable young lady with a rich father, and she was petted and made much of at the great house, in the character of Miss Blanchard's last new plaything. Not long afterwards Mr. Blanchard and his daughter went abroad, and took the girl with them in the capacity of Miss Blanchard's little maid. When they came back, the daughter had married, and become a widow, in the interval; and the pretty little maid, instead of returning with them to Thorpe-Ambrose, turns up suddenly, all alone, as a pupil at a school in France. There she was, at a first-rate establishment, with her maintenance and education secured until she married and settled in life, on this understanding,—that she never returned to England. Those were all the particulars she could be prevailed on to give the lawyer who drew up these instructions. She declined to say what had happened abroad; she declined even, after all the years that had passed, to mention her mistress's married name. It's quite clear, of course, that she was in possession of some family secret; and that the Blanchards paid for her schooling on the Continent to keep her out of the way. And it's equally plain that she would never have kept her secret as she did, if she had not seen her way to trading on it for her own advantage at some future time. A clever woman,

as I've told you already! A devilish clever woman, who hasn't been knocked about in the world, and seen the ups and downs of life abroad and at home for nothing."

"Yes, yes, Jemmy; quite true. How long did she stop, please, at the school in France?"

Bashwood the younger referred to the papers.

"She stopped at the French school," he replied, "till she was seventeen. At that time, something happened at the school which I find mildly described in these papers as 'something unpleasant.' The plain fact was, that the music-master attached to the establishment fell in love with Miss Gwilt. He was a respectable middle-aged man, with a wife and family—and finding the circumstances entirely hopeless, he took a pistol, and rashly assuming that he had brains in his head, tried to blow them out. The doctors saved his life, but not his reason—he ended, where he had better have begun, in an asylum. Miss Gwilt's beauty having been at the bottom of the scandal, it was of course impossible—though she was proved to have been otherwise quite blameless in the matter—for her to remain at the school after what had happened. Her 'friends' (the Blanchards) were communicated with. And her friends transferred her to another school; at Brussels, this time.—What are you sighing about? what's wrong now?"

"I can't help feeling a little for the poor music-master, Jemmy. Go on."

"According to her own account of it, dad, Miss Gwilt seems to have felt for him too. She took a serious turn; and was 'converted' (as they call it) by the lady who had charge of her in the interval before she went to Brussels. The priest at the Belgian school appears to have been a man of some discretion, and to have seen that the girl's sensibilities were getting into a dangerously excited state. Before he could quiet her down, he fell ill, and was succeeded by another priest, who was a fanatic. You will understand the sort of interest he took in the girl, and the way in which he worked on her feelings, when I tell you that she announced it as her decision, after having been nearly two years at the school, to end her days in a convent! You may well stare! Miss Gwilt, in the character of a Nun, is the sort of female phenomenon you don't often set eyes on. Women are queer creatures."

"Did she go into the convent?" asked Mr. Bashwood. "Did they let her go in, so friendless and so young, with nobody to advise her for the best?"

"The Blanchards were consulted, as a matter of form," pursued Bashwood the younger. "They had no objection to her shutting herself up in a convent, as you may well imagine. The pleasantest letter they ever had from her, I'll answer for it, was the letter in which she solemnly took leave of them in this world for ever. The people at the convent were as careful as usual not to commit themselves. Their rules wouldn't allow her to take the veil till she had tried the life for a year first, and

then, if she had any doubt, for another year after that. She tried the life for the first year, accordingly—and doubted. She tried it for the second year—and was wise enough, by that time, to give it up without further hesitation. Her position was rather an awkward one when she found herself at liberty again. The sisters at the convent had lost their interest in her; the mistress at the school declined to take her back as teacher, on the ground that she was too nice-looking for the place; the priest considered her to be possessed by the devil. There was nothing for it but to write to the Blanchards again, and ask them to start her in life as a teacher of music on her own account. She wrote to her former mistress accordingly. Her former mistress had evidently doubted the genuineness of the girl's resolution to be a nun, and had seized the opportunity offered by the farewell letter of three years since to cut off all further communication between her ex-waiting maid and herself. Miss Gwilt's letter was returned by the post-office. She caused inquiries to be made; and found that Mr. Blanchard was dead, and that his daughter had left the great house for some place of retirement unknown. The next thing she did, upon this, was to write to the heir in possession of the estate. The letter was answered by his solicitors, who were instructed to put the law in force at the first attempt she made to extort money from any member of the family at Thorpe-Ambrose. The last chance was to get at the address of her mistress's place of retirement. The family bankers, to whom she wrote, wrote back to say that they were instructed not to give the lady's address to any one applying for it, without being previously empowered to do so by the lady herself. That last letter settled the question—Miss Gwilt could do nothing more. With money at her command, she might have gone to England, and made the Blanchards think twice before they carried things with too high a hand. Not having a halfpenny at command, she was helpless. Without money and without friends, you may wonder how she supported herself while the correspondence was going on. She supported herself by playing the pianoforte at a low concert-room in Brussels. The men laid siege to her, of course, in all directions—but they found her insensible as adamant. One of these rejected gentlemen was a Russian; and he was the means of making her acquainted with a countrywoman of his—whose name is unpronounceable by English lips. Let us give her her title, and call her the Baroness. The two women liked each other at their first introduction; and a new scene opened in Miss Gwilt's life. She became reader and companion to the Baroness. Everything was right, everything was smooth on the surface. Everything was rotten and everything was wrong, under it."

"In what way, Jemmy? Please to wait a little, and tell me in what way."

"In this way. The Baroness was fond of travelling, and she had a select set of friends about her, who were quite of her way of thinking. They went from one city on the Continent to another, and were such charming people that they picked up acquaintances everywhere. The

acquaintances were invited to the Baroness's receptions—and card-tables were invariably a part of the Baroness's furniture. Do you see it now? or must I tell you, in the strictest confidence, that cards were not considered sinful on these festive occasions, and that the luck, at the end of the evening, turned out to be almost invariably on the side of the Baroness and her friends. Swindlers, all of them—and there isn't a doubt on my mind, whatever there may be on yours, that Miss Gwilt's manners and appearance made her a valuable member of the society in the capacity of a decoy. Her own statement is, that she was innocent of all knowledge of what really went on; that she was quite ignorant of card-playing; that she hadn't such a thing as a respectable friend to turn to in the world; and that she honestly liked the Baroness, for the simple reason that the Baroness was a hearty good friend to her from first to last. Believe that or not, as you please. For five years she travelled about all over the Continent, with these card-sharpers in high life, and she might have been among them at this moment, for anything I know to the contrary, if the Baroness had not caught a Tartar at Naples, in the shape of a rich travelling Englishman, named Waldron. Aha! that name startles you, does it? You've read the Trial of the famous Mrs. Waldron, like the rest of the world? And you know who Miss Gwilt is now, without my telling you?"

He paused, and looked at his father in sudden perplexity. Far from being overwhelmed by the discovery which had just burst on him, Mr. Bashwood, after the first natural movement of surprise, faced his son with a self-possession which was nothing short of extraordinary under the circumstances. There was a new brightness in his eyes, and a new colour in his face. If it had been possible to conceive such a thing of a man in his position, he seemed to be absolutely encouraged instead of depressed by what he had just heard. "Go on, Jemmy," he said, quietly; "I am one of the few people who didn't read the Trial—I only heard of it."

Still wondering inwardly, Bashwood the younger recovered himself, and went on.

"You always were, and you always will be, behind the age," he said. "When we come to the Trial, I can tell you as much about it as you need know. In the meantime, we must go back to the Baroness and Mr. Waldron. For a certain number of nights the Englishman let the card-sharpers have it all their own way—in other words, he paid for the privilege of making himself agreeable to Miss Gwilt. When he thought he had produced the necessary impression on her, he exposed the whole confederacy without mercy. The police interfered; the Baroness found herself in prison; and Miss Gwilt was put between the two alternatives of accepting Mr. Waldron's protection, or being thrown on the world again. She was amazingly virtuous, or amazingly clever, which you please. To Mr. Waldron's astonishment, she told him that she could face the prospect of being thrown on the world; and that he must address her honourably or leave her for ever. The end of it was what the end always is,

where the man is infatuated and the woman is determined. To the disgust of his family and friends, Mr. Waldron made a virtue of necessity, and married her."

"How old was he?" asked Bashwood the elder eagerly.

Bashwood the younger burst out laughing. "He was about old enough, daddy, to be your son, and rich enough to have burst that precious pocket-book of yours with thousand-pound notes! Don't hang your head. It wasn't a happy marriage, though he *was* so young and so rich. They lived abroad, and got on well enough at first. He made a new will, of course, as soon as he was married, and provided handsomely for his wife, under the tender pressure of the honeymoon. But women wear out, like other things, with time; and one fine morning Mr. Waldron woke up with a doubt in his mind whether he had not acted like a fool. He was an ill-tempered man; he was discontented with himself; and of course he made his wife feel it. Having begun by quarrelling with her, he got on to suspecting her, and became savagely jealous of every male creature who entered the house. They had no incumbrances in the shape of children, and they moved from one place to another, just as his jealousy inclined him, till they moved back to England at last, after having been married close on four years. He had a lonely old house of his own among the Yorkshire moors, and there he shut his wife and himself up from every living creature, except his servants and his dogs. Only one result could come, of course, of treating a high-spirited young woman in that way. It may be fate, or it may be chance—but, whenever a woman is desperate, there is sure to be a man handy to take advantage of it. The man in this case was rather a 'dark horse,' as they say on the turf. He was a certain Captain Manuel, a native of Cuba, and (according to his own account) an ex-officer in the Spanish navy. He had met Mr. Waldron's beautiful wife on the journey back to England; had contrived to speak to her in spite of her husband's jealousy; and had followed her to her place of imprisonment in Mr. Waldron's house on the moors. The captain is described as a clever, determined fellow—of the daring piratical sort—with the dash of mystery about him that women like——"

"She's not the same as other women!" interposed Mr. Bashwood, suddenly interrupting his son. "Did she ——?" His voice failed him, and he stopped without bringing the question to an end.

"Did she like the captain?" suggested Bashwood the younger with another laugh. "According to her own account of it, she adored him. At the same time her conduct (as represented by herself) was perfectly innocent. Considering how carefully her husband watched her, the statement (incredible as it appears) is probably true. For six weeks or so, they confined themselves to corresponding privately; the Cuban captain (who spoke and wrote English perfectly,) having contrived to make a go-between of one of the female servants in the Yorkshire house. How it might have ended we needn't trouble ourselves to inquire—Mr. Waldron himself brought matters to a crisis. Whether he got wind

of the clandestine correspondence or not, doesn't appear. But this is certain, that he came home from a ride one day, in a fiercer temper than usual—that his wife showed him a sample of that high spirit of hers which he had never yet been able to break—and that it ended in his striking her across the face with his riding-whip. Ungentlemanly conduct, I am afraid we must admit; but to all outward appearance, the riding-whip produced the most astonishing results. From that moment, the lady submitted as she had never submitted before. For a fortnight afterwards, he did what he liked; and she never thwarted him—he said what he liked; and she never uttered a word of protest. Some men might have suspected this sudden reformation of hiding something dangerous under the surface. Whether Mr. Waldron looked at it in that light, I can't tell you. All that is known is, that before the mark of the whip was off his wife's face, he fell ill, and that in two days afterwards, he was a dead man. What do you say to that?"

"I say he deserved it!" answered Mr. Bashwood, striking his hand excitedly on the table, as his son paused, and looked at him.

"The doctor who attended the dying man was not of your way of thinking," remarked Bashwood the younger, drily. "He called in two other medical men, and they all three refused to certify the death. The usual legal investigation followed. The evidence of the doctors and the evidence of the servants pointed irresistibly in one and the same direction; and Mrs. Waldron was committed for trial, on the charge of murdering her husband by poison. A solicitor in first-rate criminal practice was sent for from London, to get up the prisoner's defence—and these 'Instructions' took their form and shape accordingly. What's the matter? What do you want now?"

Suddenly rising from his chair, Mr. Bashwood stretched across the table, and tried to take the papers from his son. "I want to look at them," he burst out eagerly. "I want to see what they say about the captain from Cuba. He was at the bottom of it, Jemmy—I'll swear he was at the bottom of it!"

"Nobody doubted that, who was in the secret of the case at the time," rejoined his son. "But nobody could prove it. Sit down again, dad, and compose yourself. There's nothing here about Captain Manuel but the lawyer's private suspicions of him, for the counsel to act on or not, at the counsel's discretion. From first to last, she persisted in screening the captain. At the outset of the business, she volunteered two statements to the lawyer—both of which he suspected to be false. In the first place, she declared that she was innocent of the crime. He wasn't surprised, of course, so far; his clients were, as a general rule, in the habit of deceiving him in that way. In the second place, while admitting her private correspondence with the Cuban captain, she declared that the letters on both sides related solely to a proposed elopement, to which her husband's barbarous treatment had induced her to consent. The lawyer naturally asked to see the letters. 'He has burnt all my letters, and I have burnt

all his,' was the only answer he got. It was quite possible that Captain Manuel might have burnt *her* letters, when he heard there was a coroner's inquest in the house. But it was in her solicitor's experience (as it is in my experience too) that when a woman is fond of a man, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, risk or no risk, she keeps his letters. Having his suspicions roused in this way, the lawyer privately made some inquiries about the foreign captain—and found that he was as short of money as a foreign captain could be. At the same time, he put some questions to his client about her expectations from her deceased husband. She answered, in high indignation, that a will had been found among her husband's papers, privately executed only a few days before his death, and leaving her no more, out of all his immense fortune, than five thousand pounds. 'Was there an older will, then,' says the lawyer, 'which the new will revoked?' Yes, there was; a will that he had given into her own possession; a will made when they were first married. 'Leaving his widow well provided for?' Leaving her just ten times as much as the second will left her. 'Had she ever mentioned that first will, now revoked, to Captain Manuel?' She saw the trap set for her—and said, 'No, never!' without an instant's hesitation. That reply confirmed the lawyer's suspicions. He tried to frighten her by declaring that her life might pay the forfeit of her deceiving him in this matter. With the usual obstinacy of women, she remained just as immovable as ever. The captain, on his side, behaved in the most exemplary manner. He confessed to planning the elopement; he declared that he had burnt all the lady's letters as they reached him, out of regard for her reputation; he remained in the neighbourhood; and he volunteered to attend before the magistrates. Nothing was discovered that could legally connect him with the crime—or that could put him into court on the day of the Trial, in any other capacity than the capacity of a witness. I don't believe myself that there's any moral doubt (as they call it) that Manuel knew of the will which left her mistress of fifty thousand pounds; and that he was ready and willing, in virtue of that circumstance, to marry her on Mr. Waldron's death. If anybody tempted her to effect her own release from her husband by making herself a widow, the captain must have been the man. And unless she contrived, guarded and watched as she was, to get the poison for herself, the poison must have come to her in one of the captain's letters."

"I don't believe she used it, if it did come to her!" exclaimed Mr. Bashwood. "I believe it was the captain himself who poisoned her husband!"

Bashwood the younger, without noticing the interruption, folded up the Instructions for the Defence, which had now served their purpose; put them back in his bag; and produced a printed pamphlet in their place.

"Here is one of the published Reports of the Trial," he said, "which you can read at your leisure, if you like. We needn't waste time now by going into details. I have told you already how cleverly her counsel

paved his way for treating the charge of murder, as the crowning calamity of the many that had already fallen on an innocent woman. The two legal points relied on for the defence (after this preliminary flourish) were:—First, that there was no evidence to connect her with the possession of poison; and, secondly, that the medical witnesses, while positively declaring that her husband had died by poison, differed in their conclusions as to the particular drug that had killed him. Both good points, and both well worked; but the evidence on the other side bore down everything before it. The prisoner was proved to have had no less than three excellent reasons for killing her husband. He had treated her with almost unexampled barbarity; he had left her in a will (unrevoked so far as she knew) mistress of a fortune on his death; and she was by her own confession contemplating an elopement with another man. Having set forth these motives, the prosecution next showed by evidence, which was never once shaken on any single point, that the one person in the house who could by any human possibility have administered the poison, was the prisoner at the bar. What could the judge and jury do, with such evidence before them as this? The verdict was Guilty, as a matter of course; and the judge declared that he agreed with it. The female part of the audience was in hysterics; and the male part was not much better. The judge sobbed, and the Bar shuddered. She was sentenced to death in such a scene as had never been previously witnessed in an English Court of Justice. And she is alive and hearty at the present moment; free to do any mischief she pleases, and to poison at her own entire convenience, any man, woman, or child that happens to stand in her way. A most interesting woman! Keep on good terms with her, my dear sir, whatever you do—for the Law has said to her in the plainest possible English, ‘My charming friend, I have no terrors for you!’”

“How was she pardoned?” asked Mr. Bashwood breathlessly. “They told me at the time—but I have forgotten. Was it the Home-Secretary? If it was, I respect the Home-Secretary! I say the Home-Secretary was deserving of his place.”

“Quite right, old gentleman!” rejoined Bashwood the younger. “The Home-Secretary was the obedient humble servant of an enlightened Free Press—and he *was* deserving of his place. Is it possible you don’t know how she cheated the gallows? If you don’t I must tell you. On the evening of the Trial, two or three of the young Buccaneers of Literature went down to two or three newspaper offices, and wrote two or three heartrending leading articles on the subject of the proceedings in court. The next morning the public caught light like tinder; and the prisoner was tried over again, before an amateur court of justice, in the columns of the newspapers. All the people who had no personal experience whatever on the subject, seized their pens, and rushed (by kind permission of the editor) into print. Doctors who had *not* attended the sick man, and who had *not* been present at the examination of the body, declared by dozens that he had died a natural death. Barristers without business,

who had *not* heard the evidence, attacked the jury who *had* heard it, and judged the Judge, who had sat on the bench before some of them were born. The general public followed the lead of the barristers and the doctors, and the young Buccaneers who had set the thing going. Here was the Law that they all paid to protect them, actually doing its duty in dreadful earnest! Shocking! shocking! The British Public rose to protest as one man against the working of its own machinery; and the Home-Secretary, in a state of distraction, went to the Judge. The Judge held firm. He had said it was the right verdict at the time, and he said so still. 'But suppose,' says the Home-Secretary, 'that the prosecution had tried some other way of proving her guilty at the trial than the way they did try—what would you and the jury have done then?' Of course it was quite impossible for the Judge to say. This comforted the Home-Secretary, to begin with. And, when he got the Judge's consent, after that, to having the conflict of medical evidence submitted to one great doctor; and when the one great doctor took the merciful view, after expressly stating, in the first instance, that he knew nothing practically of the merits of the case, the Home-Secretary was perfectly satisfied. The prisoner's death-warrant went into the waste-paper basket; the verdict of the Law was reversed by general acclamation; and the verdict of the newspapers carried the day. But the best of it is to come. You know what happened when the people found themselves with the pet object of their sympathy suddenly cast loose on their hands? A general impression prevailed directly that she was not quite innocent enough, after all, to be let out of prison then and there! Punish her a little—that was the state of the popular feeling—punish her a little, Mr. Home-Secretary, on general moral grounds. A small course of gentle legal medicine, if you love us—and then we shall feel perfectly easy on the subject to the end of our days."

"Don't joke about it!" cried his father. "Don't, don't, don't, Jemmy! Did they try her again? They couldn't! they dursn't! Nobody can be tried twice over for the same offence."

"Pooh! pooh! she could be tried a second time for a second offence," retorted Bashwood the younger—"and tried she was. Luckily for the pacification of the public mind, she had rushed headlong into redressing her own grievances (as women will), when she discovered that her husband had cut her down from a legacy of fifty thousand pounds to a legacy of five thousand, by a stroke of his pen. The day before the Inquest a locked drawer in Mr. Waldron's dressing-room table, which contained some valuable jewellery, was discovered to have been opened and emptied—and when the prisoner was committed by the magistrates, the precious stones were found torn out of their settings, and sewn up in her stays. The lady considered it a case of justifiable self-compensation. The Law declared it to be a robbery committed on the executors of the dead man. The lighter offence—which had been passed over, when such a charge as murder was brought against her—was just the thing to revive, to save

appearances in the eyes of the public. They had stopped the course of justice, in the case of the prisoner, at one trial; and now all they wanted was to set the course of justice going again, in the case of the prisoner, at another! She was arraigned for the robbery, after having been pardoned for the murder. And, what is more, if her beauty and her misfortunes hadn't made a strong impression on her lawyer, she would not only have had to stand another trial, but would have had even the five thousand pounds, to which she was entitled by the second will, taken away from her, as a felon, by the Crown."

"I respect her lawyer! I admire her lawyer!" exclaimed Mr. Bashwood. "I should like to take his hand, and tell him so."

"He wouldn't thank you, if you did," remarked Bashwood the younger. "He is under a comfortable impression that nobody knows how he saved Mrs. Waldron's legacy for her but himself."

"I beg your pardon, Jemmy," interposed his father. "But don't call her Mrs. Waldron. Speak of her, please, by her name when she was innocent and young, and a girl at school. Would you mind, for my sake, calling her Miss Gwilt?"

"Not I! It makes no difference to me what name I give her. Bother your sentiment! let's get on with the facts. This is what the lawyer did before the second trial came off. He told her she would be found guilty *again*, to a dead certainty. 'And this time,' he said, 'the public will let the law take its course. Have you got an old friend whom you can trust?' She hadn't such a thing as an old friend in the world. 'Very well, then,' says the lawyer, 'you must trust me. Sign this paper; and you will have executed a fictitious sale of all your property to myself. When the right time comes, I shall first carefully settle with your husband's executors; and I shall then re-convey the money to you, securing it properly (in case you ever marry again) in your own possession. The Crown, in other transactions of this kind, frequently waives its right of disputing the validity of the sale—and if the Crown is no harder on you than on other people, when you come out of prison you will have your five thousand pounds to begin the world with again.'—Neat of the lawyer, when she was going to be tried for robbing the executors, to put her up to a way of robbing the Crown, wasn't it? Ha! ha! what a world it is!"

The last effort of the son's sarcasm passed unheeded by the father. "In prison!" he said to himself. "Oh me, after all that misery, in prison again!"

"Yes," said Bashwood the younger, rising and stretching himself, "that's how it ended. The verdict was Guilty; and the sentence was imprisonment for two years. She served her time; and came out, as well as I can reckon it, about three years since. If you want to know what she did when she recovered her liberty, and how she went on afterwards, I may be able to tell you something about it—say, on another occasion, when you have got an extra note or two in your pocket-book. For the present, all you need know, you do know. There isn't the shadow of a

doubt that this fascinating lady has the double slur on her, of having been found guilty of murder, and of having served her term of imprisonment for theft. There's your moneysworth for your money—with the whole of my wonderful knack at stating a case clearly, thrown in for nothing. If you have any gratitude in you, you ought to do something handsome, one of these days, for your son. But for me, I'll tell you what you would have done, old gentleman. If you could have had your own way, you would have married Miss Gwilt."

Mr. Bashwood rose to his feet; and looked his son steadily in the face.

"If I could have my own way," he said, "I would marry her now."

Bashwood the younger started back a step. "After all I have told you?" he asked, in the blankest astonishment.

"After all you have told me."

"With the chance of being poisoned, the first time you happened to offend her?"

"With the chance of being poisoned," answered Mr. Bashwood, "in four-and-twenty hours."

The Spy of the Private Inquiry Office dropped back into his chair, cowed by his father's words and his father's looks.

"Mad!" he said to himself. "Stark mad, by jingo!"

Mr. Bashwood looked at his watch, and hurriedly took his hat from a side-table.

"I should like to hear the rest of it," he said. "I should like to hear every word you have to tell me about her, to the very last. But the time, the dreadful, galloping time, is getting on. For all I know, they may be on their way to be married at this very moment."

"What are you going to do?" asked Bashwood the younger, getting between his father and the door.

"I am going to the hotel," said the old man, trying to pass him. "I am going to see Mr. Armadale."

"What for?"

"To tell him everything you have told me." He paused after making that reply. The terrible smile of triumph which had once already appeared on his face, overspread it again. "Mr. Armadale is young; Mr. Armadale has all his life before him," he whispered cunningly, with his trembling fingers clutching his son's arm. "What doesn't frighten me will frighten him!"

"Wait a minute," said Bashwood the younger. "Are you as certain as ever that Mr. Armadale is the man?"

"What man?"

"The man who is going to marry her."

"Yes! yes! yes! Let me go, Jemmy—let me go."

The Spy set his back against the door, and considered for a moment. Mr. Armadale was rich. Mr. Armadale (if he was not stark mad, too) might be made to put the right money-value on information that saved him from the disgrace of marrying Miss Gwilt. "It may be a hundred

pounds in my pocket, if I work it myself," thought Bashwood the younger. "And it won't be a halfpenny if I leave it to my father." He took up his hat, and his leather bag. "Can you carry it all in your own addled old head, daddy?" he asked, with his easiest impudence of manner. "Not you! I'll go with you, and help you. What do you think of that?"

The father threw his arms in an ecstasy round the son's neck. "I can't help it, Jemmy," he said, in broken tones. "You are so good to me. Take the other note, my dear—I'll manage without it—take the other note."

The son threw open the door with a flourish; and magnanimously turned his back on the father's offered pocket-book. "Hang it, old gentleman, I'm not quite so mercenary as *that*!" he said, with an appearance of the deepest feeling. "Put up your pocket-book, and let's be off.—If I took my respected parent's last five-pound note," he thought to himself, as he led the way downstairs, "how do I know he mightn't cry halves when he sees the colour of Mr. Armadale's money?—Come along, dad!" he resumed. "We'll take a cab and catch the happy bridegroom before he starts for the church!"

They hailed a cab in the street, and started for the hotel which had been the residence of Midwinter and Allan during their stay in London. The instant the door of the vehicle had closed, Mr. Bashwood returned to the subject of Miss Gwilt.

"Tell me the rest," he said, taking his son's hand, and patting it tenderly. "Let's go on talking about her all the way to the hotel. Help me through the time, Jemmy—help me through the time."

Bashwood the younger was in high spirits at the prospect of seeing the colour of Mr. Armadale's money. He trifled with his father's anxiety to the very last.

"Let's see if you remember what I've told you already," he began. "There's a character in the story that's dropped out of it without being accounted for. Come! can you tell me who it is?"

He had reckoned on finding his father unable to answer the question. But Mr. Bashwood's memory, for anything that related to Miss Gwilt, was as clear and ready as his son's. "The foreign scoundrel who tempted her, and let her screen him at the risk of her own life," he said, without an instant's hesitation. "Don't speak of him, Jemmy, don't speak of him again!"

"I *must* speak of him," retorted the other. "You want to know what became of Miss Gwilt, when she got out of prison, don't you? Very good—I'm in a position to tell you. She became Mrs. Manuel. It's no use staring at me, old gentleman. I know it officially. At the latter part of last year, a foreign lady came to our place, with evidence to prove that she had been lawfully married to Captain Manuel, at a former period of his career, when he had visited England for the first time. She had only lately discovered that he had been in this country again; and she had reason to believe that he had married another woman in Scotland.

Our people were employed to make the necessary inquiries. Comparison of dates showed that the Scotch marriage—if it was a marriage at all, and not a sham—had taken place just about the time when Miss Gwilt was a free woman again. And a little further investigation showed us that the second Mrs. Manuel was no other than the heroine of the famous criminal trial—whom we didn't know then, but whom we do know now, to be identical with your fascinating friend, Miss Gwilt."

Mr. Bashwood's head sank on his breast. He clasped his trembling hands fast in each other, and waited in silence to hear the rest.

"Cheer up!" pursued his son. "She was no more the captain's wife than you are—and what is more, the captain himself is out of your way now. One foggy day in December last, he gave us the slip, and was off to the Continent, nobody knew where. He had spent the whole of the second Mrs. Manuel's five thousand pounds, in the time that had elapsed (between two and three years) since she had come out of prison—and the wonder was, where he had got the money to pay his travelling expenses. It turned out that he had got it from the second Mrs. Manuel herself. She had filled his empty pockets; and there she was, waiting confidently in a miserable London lodging, to hear from him and join him as soon as he was safely settled in foreign parts! Where had *she* got the money, you may ask naturally enough? Nobody could tell at the time. My own notion is, now, that her former mistress must have been still living, and that she must have turned her knowledge of the Blanchards' family secret to profitable account at last. This is mere guess-work of course; but there's a circumstance that makes it likely guess-work, to my mind. She had an elderly female friend to apply to at the time, who was just the woman to help her in ferreting out her mistress's address. Can you guess the name of the elderly female friend? Not you! Mrs. Oldershaw of course!"

Mr. Bashwood suddenly looked up. "Why should she go back," he asked, "to the woman who had deserted her when she was a child?"

"I can't say," rejoined his son, "unless she went back in the interests of her own magnificent head of hair. The prison-scissors, I needn't tell you, had made short work of it with Miss Gwilt's love-locks, in every sense of the word—and Mrs. Oldershaw, I beg to add, is the most eminent woman in England, as Restorer-General of the dilapidated heads and faces of the female sex. Put two and two together; and perhaps you'll agree with me, in this case, that they make four."

"Yes, yes; two and two make four," repeated his father, impatiently. "But I want to know something else. Did she hear from him again? Did he send for her after he had gone away to foreign parts?"

"The captain? Why, what on earth can you be thinking of? Hadn't he spent every farthing of her money? and wasn't he loose on the Continent out of her reach? She waited to hear from him, I daresay, for she persisted in believing in him. But I'll lay you any wager you like, she never saw the sight of *his* handwriting again. We did our best at the

office to open her eyes—we told her plainly that he had a first wife living, and that she hadn't the shadow of a claim on him. She wouldn't believe us, though we met her with the evidence. Obstinate, devilish obstinate. I daresay she waited for months together before she gave up the last hope of ever seeing him again."

Mr. Bashwood looked aside quickly out of the cab window. "Where could she turn for refuge next?" he said, not to his son, but to himself. "What, in heaven's name, could she do?"

"Judging by my experience of women," remarked Bashwood the younger, overhearing him, "I should say she probably tried to drown herself. But that's only guess-work again—it's all guess-work at this part of her story. You catch me at the end of my evidence, dad, when you come to Miss Gwilt's proceedings in the spring and summer of the present year. She might, or she might not, have been desperate enough to attempt suicide; and she might, or she might not, have been at the bottom of those inquiries that I made for Mrs. Oldershaw. I daresay you'll see her this morning, and perhaps, if you use your influence, you may be able to make her finish her own story herself."

Mr. Bashwood, still looking out of the cab window, suddenly laid his hand on his son's arm.

"Hush! hush!" he exclaimed, in violent agitation. "We have got there at last. Oh, Jemmy, feel how my heart beats! Here is the hotel."

"Bother your heart," said Bashwood the younger. "Wait here while I make the inquiries."

"I'll come with you!" cried his father. "I can't wait! I tell you, I can't wait!"

They went into the hotel together, and asked for "Mr. Armadale."

The answer, after some little hesitation and delay, was that Mr. Armadale had gone away six days since. A second waiter added, that Mr. Armadale's friend—Mr. Midwinter—had only left that morning. Where had Mr. Armadale gone? Somewhere into the country. Where had Mr. Midwinter gone? Nobody knew.

Mr. Bashwood looked at his son in speechless and helpless dismay.

"Stuff and nonsense!" said Bashwood the younger, pushing his father back roughly into the cab. "He's safe enough. We shall find him at Miss Gwilt's."

The old man took his son's hand and kissed it. "Thank you, my dear," he said, gratefully. "Thank you for comforting me."

The cab was driven next to the second lodging which Miss Gwilt had occupied, in the neighbourhood of Tottenham Court Road.

"Stop here," said the Spy, getting out, and shutting his father into the cab. "I mean to manage this part of the business myself."

He knocked at the house door. "I have got a note for Miss Gwilt," he said, walking into the passage, the moment the door was opened.

"She's gone," answered the servant. "She went away last night."

Bashwood the younger wasted no more words with the servant. He

insisted on seeing the mistress. The mistress confirmed the announcement of Miss Gwilt's departure on the previous evening. Where had she gone to? The woman couldn't say. How had she left? On foot. At what hour? Between nine and ten. What had she done with her luggage? She had no luggage. Had a gentleman been to see her on the previous day? Not a soul, gentle or simple, had come to the house to see Miss Gwilt.

The father's face, pale and wild, was looking out of the cab window, as the son descended the house-steps. "Isn't she there, Jemmy?" he asked faintly—"Isn't she there?"

"Hold your tongue," cried the Spy, with the native coarseness of his nature rising to the surface at last. "I'm not at the end of my inquiries yet."

He crossed the road, and entered a coffee-shop situated exactly opposite the house he had just left.

In the box nearest the window two men were sitting talking together anxiously.

"Which of you was on duty yesterday evening, between nine and ten o'clock?" asked Bashwood the younger, suddenly joining them, and putting his question in a quick peremptory whisper.

"I was, sir," said one of the men, unwillingly.

"Did you lose sight of the house?—Yes! I see you did."

"Only for a minute, sir. An infernal blackguard of a soldier came in——"

"That will do," said Bashwood the younger. "I know what the soldier did, and who sent him to do it. She has given us the slip again. You are the greatest Ass living. Consider yourself dismissed." With those words, and with an oath to emphasize them, he left the coffee-shop and returned to the cab.

"She's gone!" cried his father. "Oh, Jemmy, Jemmy, I see it in your face!" He fell back into his own corner of the cab, with a faint wailing cry. "They're married," he moaned to himself; his hands falling helplessly on his knees; his hat falling unregarded from his head. "Stop them!" he exclaimed, suddenly rousing himself, and seizing his son in a frenzy by the collar of the coat.

"Go back to the hotel," shouted Bashwood the younger, to the cabman. "Hold your noise!" he added, turning fiercely on his father. "I want to think."

The varnish of smoothness was all off him by this time. His temper was roused. His pride—even such a man has his pride!—was wounded to the quick. Twice had he matched his wits against a woman's; and twice the woman had baffled him.

He got out, on reaching the hotel for the second time; and privately tried the servants with the offer of money. The result of the experiment satisfied him that they had, in this instance, really and truly, no information to sell. After a moment's reflection, he stopped, before leaving the hotel, to ask the way to the parish church. "The chance may be worth trying,"

he thought to himself, as he gave the address to the driver. "Faster!" he called out, looking first at his watch, and then at his father. "The minutes are precious this morning; and the old one is beginning to give in."

It was true. Still capable of hearing and of understanding, Mr. Bashwood was past speaking by this time. He clung with both hands to his son's grudging arm, and let his head fall helplessly on his son's averted shoulder.

The parish church stood back from the street, protected by gates and railings, and surrounded by a space of open ground. Shaking off his father's hold, Bashwood the younger made straight for the vestry. The clerk, putting away the books, and the clerk's assistant, hanging up a surplice, were the only persons in the room when he entered it, and asked leave to look at the marriage Register for the day.

The clerk gravely opened the book, and stood aside from the desk on which it lay.

The day's register comprised three marriages solemnized that morning—and the first two signatures on the page, were "Allan Armadale" and "Lydia Gwilt!"

Even the Spy—ignorant as he was of the truth; unsuspicious as he was of the terrible future consequences to which the act of that morning might lead—even the Spy started, when his eye first fell on the page. It was done! Come what might of it, it was done now. There, in black and white, was the registered evidence of the marriage, which was at once a truth in itself, and a lie in the conclusion to which it led! There—through the fatal similarity in the names—there, in Midwinter's own signature, was the proof to persuade everybody that, not Midwinter, but Allan, was the husband of Miss Gwilt!

Bashwood the younger closed the book and returned it to the clerk. He descended the vestry steps with his hands thrust doggedly into his pockets, and with a serious shock inflicted on his professional self-esteem.

The beadle met him under the church wall. He considered for a moment whether it was worth while to spend a shilling in questioning the man, and decided in the affirmative. If they could be traced and overtaken, there might be a chance of seeing the colour of Mr. Armadale's money, even yet.

"How long is it," he asked, "since the first couple married here this morning, left the church?"

"About an hour," said the beadle.

"How did they go away?"

The beadle deferred answering that second question until he had first pocketed his fee. "You won't trace them from here, sir," he said, when he had got his shilling. "They went away on foot."

"And that is all you know about it?"

"That, sir, is all I know about it."

Left by himself, even the Detective of the Private Inquiry Office paused for a moment before he returned to his father at the gate. He

was roused from his hesitation by the sudden appearance, within the church enclosure, of the driver of the cab.

"I'm afraid the old gentleman is going to be taken ill, sir," said the man.

Bashwood the younger frowned angrily, and walked back to the cab. As he opened the door and looked in, his father leaned forward and confronted him, with lips that moved speechlessly, and with a white stillness over all the rest of his face.

"She's done us," said the Spy. "They were married here this morning."

The old man's body swayed for a moment from one side to the other. The instant after, his eyes closed, and his head fell forward towards the front seat of the cab. "Drive to the hospital!" cried his son. "He's in a fit. This is what comes of putting myself out of my way to please my father," he muttered, sullenly raising Mr. Bashwood's head, and loosening his cravat. "A nice morning's work. Upon my soul, a nice morning's work!"

The hospital was near, and the house-surgeon was at his post.

"Will he come out of it?" asked Bashwood the younger roughly.

"Who are *you*?" asked the surgeon sharply, on his side.

"I am his son."

"I shouldn't have thought it," rejoined the surgeon, taking the restoratives that were handed to him by the nurse, and turning from the son to the father with an air of relief which he was at no pains to conceal. "Yes," he added, after a minute or two. "Your father will come out of it, this time."

"When can he be moved away from here?"

"He can be moved from the hospital in an hour or two."

The Spy laid a card on the table. "I'll come back for him or send for him," he said. "I suppose I can go now, if I leave my name and address?" With those words, he put on his hat, and walked out.

"He's a brute!" said the nurse.

"No," said the surgeon quietly. "He's a man."

* * * * *

Between nine and ten o'clock that night, Mr. Bashwood awoke in his bed at the inn in the Borough. He had slept for some hours, since he had been brought back from the hospital; and his mind and body were now slowly recovering together.

A light was burning on the bedside-table, and a letter lay on it, waiting for him till he was awake. It was in his son's handwriting, and it contained these words:—

"MY DEAR DAD,—Having seen you safe out of the hospital, and back at your hotel, I think I may fairly claim to have done my duty by you, and may consider myself free to look after my own affairs. Business will prevent me from seeing you to-night; and I don't think it at all likely I shall be in your neighbourhood to-morrow morning. My advice to you is, to go back to Thorpe-Ambrose, and to stick to your employment in the steward's office. Wherever Mr. Armadale may be, he must, sooner or later, write to you on business. I wash my hands of the whole matter,

mind, so far as I am concerned, from this time forth. But if *you* like to go on with it, my professional opinion is (though you couldn't hinder his marriage), you may part him from his wife.

"Pray take care of yourself.

"Your affectionate son,

"JAMES BASHWOOD."

The letter dropped from the old man's feeble hands. "I wish *Jemmy* could have come to see me to-night," he thought. "But it's very kind of him to advise me all the same."

He turned wearily on the pillow, and read the letter a second time. "Yes," he said, "there's nothing left for me but to go back. I'm too poor and too old to hunt after them all by myself." He closed his eyes: the tears trickled slowly over his wrinkled cheeks. "I've been a trouble to *Jemmy*," he murmured, faintly; "I've been a sad trouble, I'm afraid, to poor *Jemmy*!" In a minute more his weakness overpowered him, and he fell asleep again.

The clock of the neighbouring church struck. It was ten. As the bell tolled the hour, the tidal train—with *Midwinter* and his wife among the passengers—was speeding nearer and nearer to Paris. As the bell tolled the hour, the watch on board *Allan's* outward-bound yacht, had sighted the lighthouse off the *Land's End*, and had set the course of the vessel for *Ushant* and *Finisterre*.

THE END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

CHAPTER I.

MISS GWILT'S DIARY.

"NAPLES, OCTOBER 10TH.—It is two months to-day, since I declared that I had closed my Diary, never to open it again.

"Why have I broken my resolution? Why have I gone back to this secret friend of my wretchedest and wickedest hours? Because I am more friendless than ever; because I am more lonely than ever, though my husband is sitting writing in the next room to me. My misery is a woman's misery, and it *will* speak—here, rather than nowhere; to my second self, in this book, if I have no one else to hear me.

"How happy I was in the first days that followed our marriage, and how happy I made *him*! Only two months have passed, and that time is a bygone time already! I try to think of anything I might have said or

done wrongly, on my side—of anything he might have said or done wrongly, on his—and I can remember nothing unworthy of my husband, nothing unworthy of myself. I cannot even lay my finger on the day when the cloud first rose between us.

"I could bear it, if I loved him less dearly than I do. I could conquer the misery of our estrangement if he only showed the change in him as brutally as other men would show it.

"But this never has happened, never will happen. It is not in his nature to inflict suffering on others. Not a hard word, not a hard look, escapes him. It is only at night, when I hear him sighing in his sleep; and sometimes when I see him dreaming, in the morning hours, that I know how hopelessly I am losing the love he once felt for me. He hides, or tries to hide it, in the day, for my sake. He is all gentleness, all kindness—but his heart is not on his lips, when he kisses me now; his hand tells me nothing when it touches mine. Day after day, the hours that he gives to his hateful writing grow longer and longer; day after day, he becomes more and more silent, in the hours that he gives to Me.

"And, with all this, there is nothing that I can complain of—nothing marked enough to justify me in noticing it. His disappointment shrinks from all open confession; his resignation collects itself by such fine degrees that even my watchfulness fails to see the growth of it. Fifty times a day, I feel the lounging in me, to throw my arms round his neck, and say, 'For God's sake, do anything to me, rather than treat me like this!'—and fifty times a day the words are forced back into my heart by the cruel considerateness of his conduct, which gives me no excuse for speaking them. I thought I had suffered the sharpest pain that I could feel, when my first husband laid his whip across my face. I thought I knew the worst that despair could do, on the day when I knew that the other villain, the meaner villain still, had cast me off. Live and learn. There is sharper pain than I felt under Waldron's whip; there is bitterer despair than the despair I knew when Manuel deserted me.

"Am I too old for him? Surely not yet! Have I lost my beauty? Not a man passes me in the street but his eyes tell me I am as handsome as ever.

"Ah, no! no! the secret lies deeper than *that*! I have thought and thought about it, till a horrible fancy has taken possession of me. He has been noble and good in his past life, and I have been wicked and disgraced. Who can tell what a gap that dreadful difference may make between us, unknown to him and unknown to me? It is folly, it is madness—but when I lie awake by him in the darkness, I ask myself whether any unconscious disclosure of the truth escapes me in the close intimacy that now unites us? Is there an unutterable Something left by the horror of my past life, which clings invisibly to me still? And is *he* feeling the influence of it, sensibly, and yet incomprehensibly to himself? Oh me! is there no purifying power in such love as mine? Are there plague-spots of past wickedness on my heart which no after-repentance can wash out?

"Who can tell? There is something wrong in our married life—I can only come back to that. There is some adverse influence that neither he nor I can trace, which is parting us farther and farther from each other, day by day. Well! I suppose I shall be hardened in time, and learn to bear it.

"An open carriage has just driven by my window, with a nicely-dressed lady in it. She had her husband by her side, and her children on the seat opposite. At the moment when I saw her she was laughing and talking in high spirits; a sparkling, light-hearted, happy woman, Ah, my lady, when you were a few years younger, if you had been left to yourself, and thrown on the world like me ——"

"October 11th.—The eleventh day of the month was the day (two months since) when we were married. He said nothing about it to me when we woke, nor I to him. But I thought I would make it the occasion, at breakfast-time, of trying to win him back.

"I don't think I ever took such pains with my toilette before; I don't think I ever looked better than I looked when I went downstairs this morning. He had breakfasted by himself, and I found a little slip of paper on the table with an apology written on it. The post to England, he said, went out that day, and his letter to the newspaper must be finished. In his place, I would have let fifty posts go out, rather than breakfast without him. I went into his room. There he was, immersed body and soul in his hateful writing! 'Can't you give me a little time this morning?' I asked. He got up with a start. 'Certainly, if you wish it.' He never even looked at me as he said the words. The very sound of his voice told me that all his interest was centred in the pen that he had just laid down. 'I see you are occupied,' I said; 'I don't wish it.' Before I had closed the door on him he was back at his desk. I have often heard that the wives of authors have been for the most part unhappy women. And now I know why.

"I suppose, as I said yesterday, I shall learn to bear it. (What *stuff*, by the by, I seem to have written yesterday! how ashamed I should be if anybody saw it but myself!) I hope the trumpery newspaper he writes for won't succeed! I hope his rubbishing letter will be well cut up by some other newspaper as soon as it gets into print!

"What am I to do with myself all the morning? I can't go out,—it's raining. If I open the piano, I shall disturb the industrious journalist who is scribbling in the next room. Oh dear! it was lonely enough in my lodging at Thorpe-Ambrose, but how much lonelier it is here. Shall I read? No; books don't interest me; I hate the whole tribe of authors. I think I shall look back through these pages, and live my life over again when I was plotting and planning, and finding a new excitement to occupy me in every new hour of the day.

"He might have looked at me, though he *was* so busy with his writing. He might have said, 'How nicely you are dressed this morning!'

He might have remembered,—never mind what! All he remembers is the newspaper.

"*Twelve o'clock*.—I have been reading and thinking; and, thanks to my Diary, I have got through an hour.

"What a time it was,—what a life it was, at Thorpe-Ambrose! I wonder I kept my senses. It makes my heart beat, it makes my face flush, only to read about it now!

"The rain still falls, and the journalist still scribbles. I don't want to think the thoughts of that past time over again. And yet, what else can I do?

"Supposing—I only say supposing—I felt now, as I felt when I travelled to London with Armadale; and when I saw my way to his life as plainly as I saw the man himself all through the journey. . . ?

"I'll go and look out of window. I'll go and count the people as they pass by.

"A funeral has gone by, with the penitents in their black hoods, and the wax torches sputtering in the wet, and the little bell ringing, and the priests droning their monotonous chant. A pleasant sight to meet me at the window! I shall go back to my Diary.

"Supposing I was not the altered woman I am—I only say, supposing—how would the Grand Risk that I once thought of running, look now? I have married Midwinter in the name that is really his own. And by doing that, I have taken the first of those three steps which were once to lead me, through Armadale's life, to the fortune and the station of Armadale's widow. No matter how innocent my intentions might have been on the wedding-day—and they *were* innocent—this is one of the unalterable results of the marriage. Well, having taken the first step, then, whether I would or no, how—supposing I meant to take the second step, which I don't—how would present circumstances stand towards me? Would they warn me to draw back, I wonder? or would they encourage me to go on?

"It will interest me to calculate the chances; and I can easily tear the leaf out, and destroy it, if the prospect looks too encouraging.

"We are living here (for economy's sake), far away from the expensive English quarter, in a suburb of the city, on the Portici side. We have made no travelling acquaintances among our own country-people. Our poverty is against us; Midwinter's shyness is against us; and (with the women) my personal appearance is against us. The men from whom my husband gets his information for the newspaper, meet him at the café, and never come here. I discourage his bringing any strangers to see me; for, though years have passed since I was last at Naples, I cannot be sure that some of the many people I once knew in this place may not be living still. The moral of all this is (as the children's story-books say), that not a single witness has come to this house who could declare, if any after-inquiry took place in England, that Midwinter and I had been living here as man and wife. So much for present circumstances as they affect Me.

"Armada next. Has any unforeseen accident led him to communicate with Thorpe-Ambrose? Has he broken the conditions which the major imposed on him, and asserted himself in the character of Miss Milroy's promised husband since I saw him last?

"Nothing of the sort has taken place. No unforeseen accident has altered his position—his tempting position—towards myself. I know all that has happened to him since he left England, through the letters which he writes to Midwinter, and which Midwinter shows to me.

"He has been wrecked, to begin with. His trumpery little yacht has actually tried to drown him, after all, and has failed! It happened (as Midwinter warned him it might happen with so small a vessel) in a sudden storm. They were blown ashore on the coast of Portugal. The yacht went to pieces, but the lives, and papers, and so on, were saved. The men have been sent back to Bristol, with recommendations from their master, which have already got them employment on board an outward-bound ship. And the master himself is on his way here, after stopping first at Lisbon, and next at Gibraltar, and trying ineffectually in both places to supply himself with another vessel. His third attempt is to be made at Naples, where there is an English yacht 'laid up,' as they call it, to be had for sale or hire. He has had no occasion to write home since the wreck—for he took away from Coutts's the whole of the large sum of money lodged there for him, in circular notes. And he has felt no inclination to go back to England himself—for, with Mr. Brock dead, Miss Milroy at school, and Midwinter here, he has not a living creature in whom he is interested, to welcome him if he returned. To see *us*, and to see the new yacht, are the only two present objects he has in view. Midwinter has been expecting him for a week past, and he may walk into this very room in which I am writing, at this very moment, for all I know to the contrary.

"Tempting circumstances, these—with all the wrongs I have suffered at his mother's hands and at his, still alive in my memory; with Miss Milroy confidently waiting to take her place at the head of his household; with my dream of living happy and innocent in Midwinter's love, dispelled for ever, and with nothing left in its place to help me against myself. I wish it wasn't raining; I wish I could go out.

"Perhaps, something may happen to prevent Armadale from coming to Naples? When he last wrote, he was waiting at Gibraltar for an English steamer in the Mediterranean trade to bring him on here. He may get tired of waiting before the steamer comes, or he may hear of a yacht at some other place than this. A little bird whispers in my ear that it may possibly be the wisest thing he ever did in his life, if he breaks his engagement to join us at Naples.

"Shall I tear out the leaf on which all these shocking things have been written? No. My Diary is so nicely bound—it would be positive barbarity to tear out a leaf. Let me occupy myself harmlessly with something else. What shall it be? My dressing-case—I will put my

dressing-case tidy, and polish up the few little things in it which my misfortunes have still left in my possession.

"I have shut up the dressing-case again. The first thing I found in it was Armadale's shabby present to me on my marriage—the rubbishing little ruby ring. That irritated me to begin with. The second thing that turned up was my bottle of Drops. I caught myself measuring the doses with my eye, and calculating how many of them would be enough to take a living creature over the border-land between sleep and death. Why I should have locked the dressing-case in a fright, before I had quite completed my calculation, I don't know—but I did lock it. And here I am back again at my Diary, with nothing, absolutely nothing, to write about. Oh, the weary day! the weary day! Will nothing happen to excite me a little in this horrible place?

October 12th.—Midwinter's all-important letter to the newspaper was despatched by the post last night. I was foolish enough to suppose that I might be honoured by having some of his spare attention bestowed on me to-day. Nothing of the sort! He had a restless night, after all his writing, and got up with his head aching, and his spirits miserably depressed. When he is in this state, his favourite remedy is to return to his old vagabond habits, and go roaming away by himself nobody knows where. He went through the form, this morning (knowing I had no riding-habit), of offering to hire a little broken-kneed brute of a pony for me, in case I wished to accompany him! I preferred remaining at home. I will have a handsome horse and a handsome habit, or I won't ride at all. He went away, without attempting to persuade me to change my mind. I wouldn't have changed it of course; but he might have tried to persuade me all the same.

"I can open the piano, in his absence—that is one comfort. And I am in a fine humour for playing—that is another. There is a sonata of Beethoven's (I forget the number), which always suggests to me the agony of lost spirits in a place of torment. Come, my fingers and thumbs, and take me among the lost spirits, this morning!

"October 13th.—Our windows look out on the sea. At noon to-day, we saw a steamer coming in, with the English flag flying. Midwinter has gone to the port, on the chance that this may be the vessel from Gibraltar, with Armadale on board.

"Two o'clock.—It *is* the vessel from Gibraltar. Armadale has added one more to the long list of his blunders—he has kept his engagement to join us at Naples.

"How will it end, *now*?

"Who knows!"

Eccentricities in a Basket.

"BASKET" is the old-fashioned designation applied to the back compartment in our numerous three-mile and six-mile coaches, hourly plying the two stages between the large city of A—, its seaside suburb of Z—, and the harbour town of X— farther on. The scene is very remote from town, far in the provinces of the North.

Our household being now situated at Z—, while yet bound by various ties to dear old picturesque A—, it is my own frequent lot to traverse the interval both ways; on which occasions, although a railway is equally available, I generally by preference use the coach, with a distinct partiality for "the basket" thereof.

Placed behind the carriage, it opens endways and clear of the wheels. The front section is undoubtedly much more select; but against this must be set to the account of the other end, that beside its door is stationed the "boy," who performs the duty of conductor as smartly and civilly as if he was full-grown. For all facilities of exit or entrance, this advantage is obvious; and, besides, the fare lies moderately but genteelly between that of the aristocratic front and that of the top—inaccessible in a lady's case for conventional reasons. Again, I often find in the basket some nondescript fellow-passenger of a congenial turn; and there are certain frequent characteristic contents of much interest. And, I confess, I like to hear people's genuine voices, and see their natural gestures; to hear them make known the progress of crops, the state of markets, the probable prices of oatmeal and potatoes, the actual value of fat pigs per stone. It is instructive to take distinctly into mind what any two old goodies will gossip about; to discover what can possibly break the lethargic content of a rural intelligence, which apparently, if but wheeled onwards, could gape satisfied for a hundred miles. An odd medley is composed when these mingle with the well-doing tradespeople with smug looks and insignificant remarks,—with the staid old maids, the peripatetic masters at seminaries, the recovering invalids, the brisk commercial travellers, the careful landladies of lodgings, the occasional school-girls, the pair of governesses ever separately seen, and the one provokingly-frequent woman (still a problem between housekeeper and proprietor of a mangle), who make up the average staple of our society in the coach-basket. Of course *all* does go well in the basket. Its legal limitation to six occupants at a time is rather inconveniently open to check from a by-law which fails to regulate the admission of children, or to settle how many at this or that age may fairly be compressible in the room for a single adult. However partial to children, yet it is difficult to keep calm

amidst the bristling of strange toys, and smile when sticky comfits must be handed across to soothe disorder. Then, there is great looseness in the definition of parcels—a provoking vagueness of distinction between hand-bags and luggage fit for the boot, between a pottle and a hamper,—between nosegays that may be held, actual bunches of vegetables, and plants positively growing in pots. Also it might be reasonable to complain of the hidden fragility of band-boxes behind one's heels, and the obtruded solidity of culinary utensils before one's toes. But if the licence touches an extreme, seldom is there wanting a sufficient quorum of grave “basketeers” for its repression.

Improper or thoroughly ineligible people rarely intrude into the basket. The case *has* occurred of a person of the humbler grades, mainly subsisting on his property in bathing-machines, whose state of health disposed him to prefer the basket on any winter errand to or from A——. He chanced to wear in general an old-fashioned waterproof greatcoat, and was otherwise inoffensive—of deferential manner, quiet to the last degree; but the result was his being obliged to take the train on all similar occasions. There was, moreover, an industrious jobbing-gardener not long ago in our watering-place, for whose absence last summer no other reason has yet been alleged than his rash procedure one snowy day in taking a seat by this compartment. It was said he professed to be labouring under a severe cold, and seemed to expect or wish the glass of the end-window kept up,—a thing seldom done, unless required by ladies. Failing this, it is understood that he sat gloomily sucking some coarse-flavoured specific all the way. It is even alleged that he must have come straight from work among damp leek-beds, if not carrying them at the very time to town.

Amongst the top-passengers, there is one whose company within would outweigh all our advantages. A brisk, though heavy man, with a large purple face, which luckily seems to need air; his clothes usually of the same hard-wearing colour, though with crape on his hat; and an evident vulgar enjoyment of the freedom, the motion, and the company, as may be heard, when not seen, by the dangling of his wrinkled boots over an end-ladder to a kind of tune with the horses. He generally goes up at a bound, whistling. His hands make a clink in his pockets. He nods to the driver; the clerk at the office knows him; the porters incline to touch their hats; and at any pause in our course he may be heard offering such bids, such bids for a horse, a dog, a chaise, or a cart, that it is plain no economical considerations sway him. This leads us to hope that should any whim prompt him to ride inside, he will inflict himself on the front compartment. Rumour asserts that he is a successful broker of some sort, in connection with our numerous furniture sales and house-fittings in Z——; where he has, it seems, built new shops, and laid out ground for the construction of a marine villa to his own taste, with baths, fountain, and pleasure-garden in an Oriental style; and is, according to our many gossips, a widower on the look-out for a fresh mistress to

his household and mother to his family. Trivial to the chance of his companionship in the basket, is the liability to be favoured, of hot mornings, with the presence of an effervescent young bather or two returning to business in the city ; a couple of lawyers' clerks, or a trio of students, who, it might be supposed, are wont respectively to move about in these numerical proportions. By way of rare variety, the basket has been found the *pis-aller* of an indubitable first-class traveller. I have one in my memory now—one who was hurried up in an over-driven cab from the railway station, where the mail-train had been missed. His servant and his gun-cases and other appurtenances went scrambling up—even a brace of pointers were hoisted somewhere ; but no room remained for him in front ; and he was lodged just within our precincts. He was a most gentlemanly person, with long legs, which did not, however, give the least trouble, almost leaving room for an extra fare. None of our peculiarities seemed to attract his notice ; he appeared unconscious of any voice or feature among us ; indeed, it became evident that he saw only with one eye, and that not without the help of a glass.

Let it not be conceived, however, that no incidents more exciting ever thrill our jog-trot course ; the truth is, there are special contingencies of a nature to mark out the basket in this view. Late of an evening, past the check-box at the turnpike, the drivers *will* exercise a power to take up stray wayside fares, whether pleading or peremptory, who are strangely apt to be huddled into the convenient back. If a traveller of any class, sex, or age seem likely to require care in transmission, the usual drift of all parties is to devolve it on our end of the coach. Too often have symptoms appeared, ere the end, of a condition on the part of the individual so tenderly entrusted, such as may best be denoted by the admission that I have not myself known it reach the pitch of fury, or exactly resemble medical accounts of *delirium tremens*. However, it is not long ago since there was "booked" one night in the office, along with our respectable little company to Z——, an excessively quiet tradesman-like person, accompanied by his much too solicitous wife, whose youth, rosy cheeks, and shrewd prominence in the transaction went far to cover it. Apparently it was fatigue that settled him at once in the furthest corner, where, screened by her, he fell asleep. But, no sooner were we clear of the shop-lights and well upon the road, than he woke up, —most dreadfully woke up. Our solitary lamp from overhead disclosed that the wretch was, beyond all doubt, tipsy ! Save for the wife's strenuous exertions, her endearments joined to her authority,—(though her previous conduct had been abominably sly,) there is no saying what might have followed. As it was, the fearful creature vehemently endeavoured to convince us that it was his wife who, of the two, was intoxicated. He proceeded to sing to us a medley of songs, the most Bacchanalian in character, in the choruses of which we were expected to join ; he cast defiant frowns upon our only protector, poor old Monsieur B——, a French master in town, who, without

any effect whatever, gave the fellow his card. We all jointly had to restrain them by main force from a personal struggle; the worst result at the close being a sudden determination, on the part of the flattered monster, that he must see us home. Whether he meant it jointly or severally, is impossible to say; but he was happily diverted from his purpose by his shrewd helpmate.

It has ever been maintained that these uncouth chances impart a zest to coach travelling, bring out a variety of character and shorten the way by a stir to the thoughts, which are all unavailable within the same limits to other modes of conveyance. I myself incline to that view—when the adventure is over.

It was on a hot and glaring forenoon at Z——'s liveliest season, on a market-day, with front and top both full, a single vacancy alone remaining in the basket, that I once sat in it prepared to start for town, but conscious that in doing so I traversed the teachings of experience. Under such a combination of circumstances, to go by coach in that direction is a sort of tempting of fortune; however, the more than usual selectness of four fellow-passengers, previously installed, had lured me into breaking a rule which should rather have been enforced by consideration. Overflowed by the demand for seats, our interior had never before, probably, worn an aspect so resembling that of the more *recherché* section in front. On either side the door, politely ready to give way on due occasion, yet planted in evident determination against admitting aught unsuitable, sat a gentleman apparently equal to the most trying juncture; the one, a stout commercial dignitary from the seaport, generally understood to be a consul; the other a younger personage, unknown, but even more undoubtedly, by figure, demeanour, and accent, belonging to the upper grades of life. A widowed matron opposite me had the air of "position" still less questionable; while in the corner beyond her sat a finely-dressed young lady, of travelled "accomplishments," corresponding ease of manner, and English birth, all apparent by the style in which she had seized the occasion to converse with her neighbour, and I at once frankly included myself in the *tête-à-tête*. Already they had caught the presentiment of evil which seized me at the appearance from the office of a prompt and strident figure—a market-bound woman—a female with a heap of limp veil thrown up over an obsolete bonnet, her draperies perpendicular, her form bony and tall, lips thin, nose self-asserting, and in her grasp a neutral-tinted umbrella with a hooked head. Was it positively conceivable that *she*!—but the sentence failed at her dire advent, *malaise* in her train. Blocking up the door-way with an authoritative air, before which the "boy" dwindled, she paused in seeming civility to ask, "Will ye sit yont, sir, if ye please?" It was to the loftier of our immovable cavaliers that she addressed herself.

"Hm—ahem, I—a—a," and a nonplussed glance of appeal to our judgment was cast inward—"Really, I prefer the door, my good woman," he said, as, without yielding the point, he stood up to let her pass.

She pressed flouncing in to her rightful place, which was at my side. "I ne'er saw sic a disobleegin' uncevil set a' my days!" remarked she; adding, while still erect, with a long arm outstretched, "Here, Johnny, my man, hand us up the bit burden."

Straightway a perspiring lad, who had been hidden in her rear, thrust recklessly in over the consul's knees a bulky mass, out of all question inadmissible; but it came too late for protest or for appeal to the coach-office. The door closed with a bang, and we were rolling off to town. The "bit burden" was in form a basket, in bulk and evident weight more like a hamper, in fulness of annoyance as bad as the box of Pandora.

"Why, ma'am," exclaimed the haughtier of our champions, "you are surely not going to keep that basket in *here*!" "'Deed am I, an' what for no'?" was the answer, as she settled the huge structure on her lap. "I hae paid my money as weel as *you*, an' if ye had but sitten up a bit as I askit ye, there wad hae been less fash to get settled! I'm no' just se lang-leggit though that I'll tak' up ither folk's room, like some!"

It was plain she could be more disagreeable still, if meddled with; the worthy consul inclined to turn the subject, and by some jocose remark drew off the other into what might be called a state of armed truce. We at the inner end had the worst of it, though chiefly as yet in a mere bodily way, from the trenching on our legitimate space. Worse than mere contact with that odious piece of luggage, was the sense of a sour, silent notice under which none of us passed scathless. A slight instinctive movement of my own was first to draw it out, in the grimly-apologetic allusion to "folk's skirts now-a-days, that couldna be keepit clear o'"; with a muttered supplement, referring to "thae menseless blauds o' what they ca' greenylin'" as extended "past bounds o' patience, no' to speak o' station!" The manner was that of some inhabitant of Z—, arguing from a local knowledge which it might be unsafe to despise. Unpleasantest of all became the woman's sudden attention to the voice of our sprightly young companion in the corner, who professed herself an entire stranger to our town till that very morning. She was comparatively at her ease, in fact, diverting us by lively accounts of continental spas and watering-places quite unlike our own; while a most unfriendly recollection of some sort was indicated beyond doubt, in every glance from the twisted-up and vixenish features of our nuisance. Meantime our late advocate by the door was again the sufferer. He happened to move his feet, when the foe all at once peered down in manifest detection of some weak point.

"Ehey!" was her uncouth exclamation, "bausket, said you! My certy! I think I had full as much richt to fetch in my bit handiskep, as ye had to bring in *yeer dug*!" By what gift of nature she ferreted out the truth, remains dubious; but dog it was,—small, to be sure, and of harmless look,—crouched somewhere under the owner's seat.

"Dog?—ah, true!" its master confessed, a good deal embarrassed. "Well, but my dog, ma'am, a mere toy-terrier, was in nobody's—"

"Has't a mizzle on? No—naething o' the sort!" emphatically

retorted the overwhelming woman, with an air of alarm which added to the inconvenience behind: "Oo, it's big enough to bite, at any rate, thae warm days. Didna ye see the pollis-notishes, that it's a heavy fine? But it's well to be seen, I trow, how *ye* didna seek a front place!"

There was altogether a vanquished effect on our luckless defender, only to be covered by the necessity of checking the little animal's irritation at her behaviour.

It now began to appear that the foe's outrageous package was made up of commodities unusually disagreeable in a limited space, but we were aided to sustain the vexation by our vivacious neighbour on the other side, where, it was true, she could better afford to make herself pleasant. She had dashed into an animated sketch of some days recently spent at Dunkirk, with its antique etiquettes and rococo tastes, as she described them; never in the least observing the pointed repugnance of those glances from our bugbear, whose visage and demeanour did not seem to have recalled the slightest association to her memory. About this English girl herself there was, it must be owned, considerable singularity. These extensive tours were remarkable at her age, for one who referred in no way to any particular company that had shared them; her extreme frankness was singular, at least in our cautious climate; and then there was the irresistible impression, even allowing for choice in the colours of dress and display of jewellery, that she was not a lady, nor a lady's maid, nor of the governess order between. Remarkable, too, was the effect of one main feature in a face which would otherwise have been exceedingly pretty. This was a much too conspicuous aquiline nose, not to be relieved—or rather, to use the artistic phrase, thrown back from relief—by abundant ringlets, with the help of very expressive eyes.

Presently the precise nature of the nuisance in the hamper was infallibly identified, with a sudden fixed disgust. Stopping short amidst her graphic account of Dunkirk, the girl fairly seized her offended nose with her handkerchief, and gave stifled vent to the ejaculation—"Oh, what a lot of herrings!" Darting a look at the obvious cause, "Oh, if there's one thing I abominate more than another," she added, "I declare it's herrings!" Then turning straight to the culprit, who as yet only gloomed a speechless defiance, she recklessly put the preposterous inquiry, "I say, ma'am, have you got any herrings in your basket?"

Ridiculous above exaggeration as it all was, the kindled wrath of the grim housewife put aught like mirth to flight thenceforth.

"What's that ye say? Hae I gotten *what*, quo' she! *Nae rings* was 't? Will it be mair o' thae fine French gewgaws, think ye, sir?" addressing her first disdainful appeal to the consul. "But there's nae hawkers here, I fancy,—though maybe folk's fingers would whiles be a' the better o' a bit gude plain ring, if it was but to show, ye ken, mem——"

She was set right, however, with somewhat of a malicious relish, by the owner of the terrier, who repeated the terms of the question too distinctly for mistake.

"Ou, it's like *you'll* be better used, sir, nae doubt," snapped she, "at unnerstannin' siccan wanderin' ladies! Hairrins, was 't? Aye"—and she turned, more confidentially than I liked, to me, "I needna speer whatten-like mainners it is, miss, to sit snuff-snuffin' at ony decent person's gear in a public conveyance, far less askin' sic brazen-faced quest'ns! But, at ony rate, it's no' just the sort o' company that might be expeckit to see keep't by ane o' the faim'ly frae Seaforth Cottage"—she was here severely referring to my own place of abode—"no' to say, hab-nabbin' wi', sae crouselly! It makes a heap o' difference, ye ken, miss," pursued she, with a deferential indication toward the lady opposite, "when a person changes their condition in life, let-a-be warldly station. But for my pairt, I need naeboddy betwixt me an' their harlagan tricks or their ower-sea gibberish, I'se warrant! Hairrins, was 't—an' I wad like to ken——"

Our matron in crape here gently interposed. "You are, surely," said she, in a propitiating way, "Mrs. White from the sea-baths—whom I ough, I think, to have——"

"Beggin' your pardon, mem—*no*," was the emphatic correction. "Miss Linkater, number five round the corner frae your ain lodge-gates. The Cornel kent me fine, worthy man, but *he* aye minded an acquaintance. It's nane o' their flats or their furnished apartments, but a gude main-door house, every way well fitted up, though I say 't—wi' a verandy to the paraud', an' new venaishan blinds, an' a comfortable gairden for-bye——"

At this attractive description our young traveller looked round; she had certainly seen the place, as she informed me aside, having, in fact, gone down that morning to Z—— with a view to seaside quarters. "We found none exactly suitable," she said, "though at this one the ticket mentioned a garden, which tempted Edward to inquire, while we idled about the beach—he was quite entrapped into going in, positively forced to look through a whole lot of little rooms full of people's things, and could absolutely scarce escape——"

"——Lone woman if I be," was pursuing the irate basket-bearer, with a settled gripe of her charge, "an' more reduced in circumstances than formerly, Mistress Cornel—was I to be insultit wi' mean-like quest'ns about wham I keep't in my pickle quiet hens, or how I cookit my bit meals o' meat, an' whatten pairt o' my house I had to mysel'—an' noo, set them up, it's hairrins, is 't! Out upon siccan pantymine speeches, say I!"

"Edward could scarce escape," our luckless companion was whispering, "from a sort of ogre, as he described it, who seemed in charge of the poultry, but turned out to be the proprietor or the tenant or something, hovering from the back-yard, with an eye upon the garden, and seeming to live mysteriously about the—— Really, I do assure you, ma'am," said she, aloud, at the further proof of injury, "if you've felt offended, 'twas unintentional; and, as for the lodgings, we——"

"A wheen wauf characters, mem, wi' hairy lips," rose the shrill assault that matched all noises of the thoroughfare outside, "gaun round the toun pittin' sic queries to honest folk—naething but a pretence, maybe to pick up the spunes—aye, let them look down off the coach-tap if they like! Mair fittin' them to hire the toun-hall, trailin' a dressed-up miss after them, to geck and nicker outside on the sands, like——"

"Pray, pray, my good worthy creature," entreated the colonel's widow, though much more hopefully sharing our glances through the windows, as the Post-office and Queen's Theatre were passed, "do, at least, I beg of you, be calm until——"

"Oh, aye, mem," she went on, dropping part of her gall on the arbiter; it's true I hae been ower long used wi' slights an' scoffs, no' to ken how to conduct myself—an' what's mair, I hope it's no for naething that I attend regular wi' a spiritual-minded congregation on Doctor Black, in Pier Street, godly man! It's nane o' their half-thay'ters, wi' an organ, to blind folk's principles to what's proper company. Nor I'm no an offisher frae the army, to come out o't and rap out the oaths I hae heard on less occasion. I canna just shift to a grand cottage i' the country, like some, when I tak' doun my bit ticket—keepin' a bloatit-like impiddent gairdner about the place, as they maybe can afford wi' a rent ta'en out o' poorer folk's mouths; but I wad like to hear——"

"There, at any rate, is the coach-office at last!" said the consul, joyfully: the gentleman with the terrier was already on his feet, and gallantly stood, when he reached the pavement, to assist the fair widow out beyond danger.

"Awa' wi' siccan play-actin' gesters an' speeches frae the heathen crew yonder!" still raved the termagant, filling up the way as she hoisted her cargo. "But it's *ae* advantage o' warld-knowledge by the house-letting business, that they're ower kenspeckle to mistak'. My troth! Catch *me* offerin' to put mysel' up about the coal-house, wi' a wheen servants o' Baal playin' cairds on my drawin'-room table, an' my new venaishan pu'd up like their ain thay'ter scroll, by a Jezebel tragicky-queen!"

"Thank my stars!" exclaimed the English girl, adjusting her ringlets ere we cautiously followed, "she's gone. Really, though, my dear, she flattered my abilities in that last hit, evidently mistaking us for some of the theatrical company here—and an excellent company it is. As for that dreadful basket, goodness be praised it was not damaged—I do not think it has oozed upon any of us after all." But at the door were two passengers from the top, or, I rather think, three—perhaps even so many as four—who evidently stood to receive her; one approaching to hand her out, when she had begun to tell me, "I think we shall try Dieppe for the remainder of the season, and if ever you should happen—— Ah, Edward," she broke off, "have I kept you waiting? Good-by, then!" and she nodded to me pleasantly; then, with unabated sprightliness, tripped out.

Outside the throng, past the office door, as I turned to the streets, was

the woman with the basket ; resting it on a curbstone for the moment, she stood following with sidelong gaze the group of travellers, and said in a general way, "Hairrins, was't? Aha! an' if it was e'en the fare that a respectable person had whyles to even theirsels' wi'—it's been kent when some folk cam' to be geyan glad, aye, an' fain, o' a gude hairrin', be't fresh, saut, or red, an' couldna win till't—no' to speak after o' the drap o' cauld water to cool their tongue! An' if I had speered what was in yon braw French-lookin' reddyckle o' hers," she concluded, taking up her load, "wha kens but it was a heap waur nor hairrins? Fau'se faces for a dishguise, maybe, or as likely cheens to drap i' the park, if no' a pea an' thinm'les! Set her up, wi' her an' her hawk-nebbit."

Further invective the concourse of business swept from hearing, unless to the knot of lounging street-porters and approving boys. All I had seen of the strangers was their rather gentlemanly air, healthy English complexions, and faces certainly much too hirsute for dramatic use ; as to the dark inuendoes of so prejudiced a censor, these deserve no weight. Nevertheless, the vivacious manner and attractive expression of the girl herself, all the more vivid for that one exaggerated feature, continued to return on thought with a curious interest in her destinies. I never afterwards beheld any of the party ; but it seemed a coincidence of some apparent point at first sight, when torn handbills struck the eye here and there, referring to late performances of a fashionable Italian conjuror or modern wizard, who had visited the city, his exhibitions being varied by the piano-playing of an accomplished daughter, whose assistance in sundry feats also added to the zest of the entertainment. Soon, on the other hand, newspaper advertisements tended to lead fancy in a different track ; for the private séances of a party of American spiritualists were announced, at some of which, from subsequent reports, a lady of special mesmeric susceptibility demonstrated her gift to a most impressive degree. In neither case did circumstances allow proof of the conjecture ; yet it was vaguely left to force the belief, that on this occasion our basket either carried a distinguished wizardess, or even conveyed the person of a wondrous medium.

More agreeable to remember is another incident of the coaches, happily exemplifying better the characteristics of their most social division. One bleak day before last Christmas, I had made the journey by rail to town ; finding it, of course, as dull as the weather. But in the starry evening I turned to the accustomed coach-office, and was stepping from it to enter the late coach for Z—, when a porter followed me to put the odd question, whether my name was "Ramage?" At a reply in the negative, he went off, saying, "Because I've got a jar for her." To each of three other basket passengers who succeeded, he addressed the same inquiry, receiving the same answer, more than once somewhat testily ; in every case making the same explanation, in his dull uninflected voice and stolid manner : all of which had a sufficiently monotonous effect in the frosty outer air. Our number was

quickly made up by an addition which in ordinary circumstances is rather cheery than otherwise ; that of a dragoon and his wife, the one being trim, tall, and stalwart, with good-humour appropriate to his bulk, the other tidy, alert, and sharp, though comparatively dumpy. Scarce had they got seated, when there appeared at our door the head of the man in search of an owner for his parcel, and for the fifth time the question was put, "Is your name Ramage?"

"No," said the soldier, with his prompt civility; "my name ain't—it's Joe Mortimer; if that will suit your purpose."

Again the reason was given, before withdrawing into the shadows,—
"Because I've got a jar for her."

Obscurely we saw him intercepting those who sought the top, and besieging the very front-section, on his tiresome quest; till the hapless article really acquired an interest above jars in ordinary. When the soldier and his wife had got their own little parcels adjusted to their mind, an idea seemed to flash upon the latter as she looked about her: "I say, though, Joe," she said, "I shouldn't wonder if that 'ere jar is for Mrs. Ram-mage, w'at lives over the way from us. I know she meant bein' in town; as her son is expected."

"Oh, in that case," said he, "we'd better take charge of it,—she mayn't have been able to reach in time, and can't like just to carry it, this cold night." Accordingly he tapped on a window, and the porter readily answered the summons. "I say, my good fellow, my missus, here, she thinks that 'ere jar must be for a neighbour of the name who keeps a little 'baccy-shop opposite the barracks. If so, just hand it here, and we'll deliver it safe enough." The man's troubles were at an end so far; in the office they would have nothing to do with it, he said, and it was not very pleasant hanging about in the cold; nevertheless, the truth was, it could not be handed in, being too large for that. "Very well, then, just get it hitched up atop," said the dragoon; "no fear but we'll have an eye to it,—so you may be off home as soon as you please." As he went off, every one settled for starting; it was thought we had seen the last of him, at all events when he had returned for a moment to say it would be found at the right-hand corner, next the driver's box.

Gruff old Mason the coachman, whip in hand, came round to count his passengers, standing upon the steps to do so; behind him once more was the man, coaxing him for some favour. This still concerned the jar, and as Mason folded up his list, his crusty temper broke down in regard to it—"To Fife wi' you an' your Ramages an' yer jaur's, ye've fairly deaved me deaf wi' them! Shut-to the door, laddie,—all full inside, an' nine on the tap. At'nce for a' I tell ye, man, heave't up yersel', or let it bide—it's bewitched, I think—I dinna believe onybody'll hae't! No' anither word noo— a' richt!"

He stumped off to mount his box; the dragoon calling out to the porter that he thought it had been put up long ago, while the latter rushed to make some last confidential statement in his ear. As the wheels

grated off behind our trampling team, he seemed vainly attempting to toss his charge upon the roof, and was left forlorn under a lamp, beating his frosted hands athwart each other.

The natural idea was that we had left the ill-fated article behind us. But boys will do for soldiers what they will not for ordinary people, and the conductor's perch had served to lodge more than its due. "I wasn't going to see a neighbour left in the lurch," said the dragoon.

"And very neighbourly she is, is Mrs. *Ram-mage*," his wife explained, "though she do live over the way, and rather a odd name to pronounce—which of course, ma'am, that's 'ow we were sure of it."

"Yes, I don't think there's another such name," agreed he, "even hereaway, where I should say there's a lot of odd ones.

"Most people arn't 'arf so friendly hereabouts," was her cordial encoium on the owner; "more particularly in regard of clothes-lines or a washing-tub, and that—wich you can't always be expected to carry."

Unfortunately for the subject of their praises, however, our boy felt much incommoded by the jar; long ere we reached the turnpike, he was shifting from one foot to the other, and at length said—"It's ower heavy, sodger,—let alane the cauldness o't, and there's a fare to get out at Cockhillside—it'll either hae to gang on the tap or be droppit.

From this alternative he was saved by the stoppage he had mentioned, which relieved us of one companion, allowing the object of their care to be taken in at the door. There, by our glimmer from the roof, it looked between the dragoon's knees a shapeless bulk indeed, somewhat like one's fancy of the jars lodged with Ali Baba.

"Why, Mary Ann," exclaimed her husband, feeling it carefully, "it ain't a jar after all—it's a basket."

"A basket? Nonsense, Joe," she said, "the man told you a jar—quite distinct! I hope it ain't a trick upon us?" Turning a frightened face in our direction, "They do sometimes put babies in baskets and leave 'em on people—and whatever should we do, if it was! Why, I've got four of my own, ma'am, at home!"

It proved to be neither a mere jar, nor simply a basket, but one of those compounds of both, well known under the name of "greybeard," which are devoted to the conveyance of usquebaugh or aqua-vitæ.

"O Joe," cried the dragoon's wife, almost as scared at this discovery as at her previous thoughts, "this can't be for Mrs. *Rammage*—whatever could she do with an 'ole 'ogged of whisky?"

"Tain't a 'ogshead, missus, don't ye see—it's only a greybeard," reasoned he, with a positiveness enforced by some uncomfortable feeling; "and if her son is expected to-morrow, as you said,—why, mayn't she mean to have a little company?"

"Well, if she do," was the answer, "she's as sly as sly! I always did say, for a Scotchwoman, Mrs. *Ram-mage* was not close of her affairs—and more especially when I gave her, no longer ago than yesterday, that nice dyed ribbon she admired."

But our pulling-up at the turnpike brought a pause to her disclosures, while the old checkman came with his lantern to tick off the fares; and it were vain to guess what more might have been said of a neighbour hitherto so esteemed had the matter not been settled by a voice at hand.

"Is there no 'a greybeard in the boot for us?" it hoarsely asked: "the mistress was to bring 't down wi' her, but she didna win up to town. It'll be direckit Tammas Ramage, down the loan here."

From among a cluster of houses down the cross-road there projected a tavern with illuminated door and casement, to which the claimant pointed; a place doubtless frequented from the neighbouring barracks, but with a sign which had been altered and newly painted, as appeared the next day I passed it. Honest Joe Mortimer's ignorance had therefore been by no means strange, but during the brief remainder of his journey in our company, his feelings seemed to turn upon this point. "Hang it, then, missus!" he muttered, striking a hand on his thigh after delivery of the well-tended freight, "to think all the while there was another of the name! I'd have sworn there wa'n't—no, not in the shire, much less at our very corner. It's an odd country for names, I must say. For all one knows, sir, why—for all one sees—it may be full of Ramages!" His predominating emotion was manifestly one of disappointment.

"I'm glad, though, if you'll believe me, ma'am," said the wife, as the coach stopped for them, "it ain't for *our* Mrs. Ram-mage after all!"

They were scarcely out, when once more a notion struck the good trooper, giving a clearness to his voice at departure: "But what if it's this son of hers, you know, that's come and took the old King's Head? Tain't a common name, is Ramage! Is his name Thomas, d'ye know? If so, by George——"

And with a cheery laugh from her in reply, they were lost in the Christmas night, amidst lively sounds of the bugle, and the changing guard. For my own part, it was pleasant to believe the neighbourly bonds were not any way broken by that jar, and that, at the expected arrival of Ramage, junior, the Mortimers really would aid to celebrate it; receiving instead of some half-grudged admission through circuitous means to an impromptu drinking-bout, the spontaneous invitation beforehand to a snug cup of tea over the way.

Into such queer little *tableaux*—noway changed by narration, save that half the oddity is lost—will actual life in our grave Northern region be occasionally thrown, when borne along by our "basket." A different interest marks the last sample to be given; for while it is the latest of all, so that the very words are here set down, there was a simple force of nature about it, touching beyond ordinary. After an absence of some duration from home at Z——, and from those errands to old A——, I once more reached the city by a long railway journey; only in proper time for an afternoon coach to the seaside town. Seated again in my favourite nook of the good old compartment, which really seemed luxurious

after leagues of steam travelling, I waited patiently for the signal from the clock on the well-known steeple; my only fellow-passenger till then being a quiet middle-aged lady, evidently accustomed to the place. In suitable style, we were congratulating ourselves on having it all between us, for the day had been wet, the roads were bad: though on what else the conversation was to turn, during the three miles to Z——, remained signally doubtful. At the last moment, the door was opened for an accession to our number, in the shape of an elderly little woman, with her gown tucked high around, the skirt over her arm, and some degree of stiffness in mounting the step. She required additional help from the juvenile conductor within, ere her ruffled garb was smoothed and her breath gained; but we were then rewarded out of a store of speech that must have been exhaustless. The neatest, pleasantest-eyed, liveliest-dimpled, most apple-cheeked of well-to-do little dames, with a mourning dress that set her off as if for church, she turned to us a face just of the sort to befit the basket; and she talked—a thing rare in the vernacular idiom of the North—as freely as a brook runs, as fearlessly, with similar unhesitating abundance and winning ease. From her protest against the high steps of the coaches, her complaint of the weather, and acknowledgment of rheumatics, we were carried through the mistake about a money-order at the post-office—which had flustered her enough in itself—to the cause of her being obliged to go down to Z—— in person, instead of making a letter serve the turn. We became informed that her youngest son, John, was in an excellent situation there, but proposed to begin business on his own account; wherefore she meant to lend him the money in question, which was her own. Straightway were we made aware that his father, her own good-man, was well able to have done it, but of late had inclined to be “hard;” though he “kent fine that he must slacken his purse-strings in the end, when *she* thought fit to say the word.” With much more by the way did she acquaint us, in a manner impossible to feel tedious, had my mild spinster companion been the primmest of old maids: among other things it seemed that the good-man, however niggardly disposed in general, was even “overly prideful” about her dressing well when she left home; more especially if, as on the present occasion, she designed to visit any of her good-daughters. Of these connections—the wives, namely, of sons—the worthy couple had several, all well settled in good substantial houses, though at some distance, as was to be expected when young men had to push their way in the world; and she hinted confidentially, that the truth was, there might soon be another in the same case. Now being started on the road so far, notwithstanding the weather and the good-man’s crotchets about fitting dress for such calls, a notion had just struck her to go on the length of X—— harbour, where one daughter-in-law was established; perhaps the best-settled of them all, with the most right to be particular about things, seeing that Andrew was in the Custom-house, holding a very responsible station. She scouted the thought of Phemie being otherwise than pleased to see her in any case, and fain to show her

their new house, or the bairns anything but glad at the surprise ; but the cheery little body indulged only a half-remorseful glee in thus stealing a march on the old man, although it were to prove he stood too much on ceremony with daughters-in-law. Her good-daughters appeared to be a favoured theme; they were each as kindly as if she had found them out for herself; they took trouble about her, though they had cost her none; they were as dear to her, in fact, and her husband's ceremony on the matter was evidently strange to her mind.

"I suppose," said the quiet middle-aged lady beside me, perhaps without much thought on the question, "you have no daughters of your own?"

"No,—no, mem," said she quickly. It seemed to me she had winced at the idea ; but the lively little woman was of a temper to dwell on no wants or regrets, and she rushed on again in new discourse, still bearing upon her main topic.

Presently the coach stopped to let down some passenger near the great cavalry barracks, half way to Z—, and we were in sight of their open main-gate. The quaint little old body sat with her back that way, but, glancing half round, she ceased in the midst of her talk; its thread snapped at the moment, and she looked to us again rather vacantly. It struck me afterwards that, as we passed on, she had started at the martial sounds issuing from the parade square—of a measured tramp of men at foot-drill, the prancing of horses, and a sudden trumpet-call. While we rolled on, "Ye were sayin' something to me, mem?" she inquired at the more watchful of her hearers; "or may be it would be me that was throng wi' some o' my haverin' stories? But I whyles need to be keep't back to the mark in my clavers."

"It seems you have been a traveller," answered I, to lead off at random from the disturbing thoughts first caused, evidently, by a meddling touch. "You have been in *London*!" I said, laying stress on the word.

"Hoots aye, that hae I, mem," was the self-complacent reply, with something of the previous heartiness; "though ye might weel hae wondered, leddies, at an auld body like me flaunting about to a' the sights I was ta'en to see, the first time I was there, like as I had been a ——" But again the tone sank, as she added, mournfully, "I was *twice* there, mem. Ye may hardly believe it—but it was when I was visitin' my puir daughter Jane."

All the light had passed out of her quick eye, and the colour faded from her complexion, showing lines of past troubles; yet she looked steadily out from it. We felt constrained to ask, almost in a whisper, "Is she dead—your daughter is dead?"

Instead of answering our question, she said, "Although it's no' a thing that I'll bide to have pried into, no, nor steered up by some folk's spite,—there's nae shame in the whole o't,—nane whatever. It gries me vent to speak o't whyles, in fit hearing. Would ye like to hear about her? for if ye would, I maun begin at the very beginning:—"

"My daughter Jane was a beautiful girl,—I'm her mother, and maybe I shouldna say it; but I am no' one to close my eyes against my bairn's faults, an' as for the rest of them, though they are a' gude and well doing, I must say they are no' extraordinar' bonny. But Jane was our only daughter, as bonny a lassie as ye need wish to see. She was a wee, smally bit thing, no doubt, but spiry frae the first. Her father used to say she took some of her good looks fra me, but it was just his daffing o' auld times, for naebody else e'er backed his words; though in my day I wasna that ill to see.

"Awell, she had a good edication given her, as they a' had, for the good-man said, 'Eduicate them weel, and then they'll be able to push their ain way.' He's a well-edicated man himsel', so ye ken I didna interfere. Then when she was done wi' her schoolin', I sent her to learn the dress-making and manty-making; for I thought she would make a real neat lady's-maid, maybe to gang abroad and see the world; though her father was wild at me for thinking such a thing, for ye ken Jane was his favourite; he thought naebody was sae bonny as her, an' oh he was proud o' her—proud at the kirk, proud when we took a walk, nae less proud at his ain board-end, or if she chanced to be in the shop when folk cam' in, and it was askit who she was after she slipt out o' their sight. Awell, when she wasna seventeen year auld, she was invited to a pairty. Oh, they're bad things, thae pairties,—never let bairns gang to pairties—No, it wasna a ball, it was a pairty at a decent friend's house, a tanner that we knew, an elder in our kirk, no less, but his house was near the Queen's Park. Before that day, Jane was a quiet lassie for a' her looks; likin' to bide in the house wi' her work, or her book, for a great reader she was forbye: but after that night, everything o' the kind went wrang wi' her. At the pairty, she had met wi' a sodger—no' a common sodger, mind, but a sergeant, and ane o' the cavalry, a regiment o' the best-famed an' the brawest o' them—and frae the moment she set eyes on him, her head was turned. He was no less fain and fond about her too, and he saw her hame to the door, though we didna know it, and they bude to meet again, and a' that sort o' thing passed between them. A' the while, too, there was a most respectable young man, son to a grocer of our acquaintance, that had just doted upon Jane, and when they used to practise thegither in the singing-class o' thar congregation, she had gi'en him some encouragement, I doubtna; so what did he do on the head o't, but he was off to America, and had made a hantle o' money through the troubles there, and he wrote home, puir lad, that he was coming back to marry her. We liked him real well oursel's, and if it hadna been for the sodger, so did she, I verily believe, and would have ta'en him. However, some time passed, till I found out who she was keepin' company wi', and I put it to her. She never denied it, but straight out an' asked leave for him to come to the house. I argued a long time to her, tel't her how angry her father would be, an' a' that, but she wouldna listen; so I thought it would be far better for her to meet him at her ain fireside, than gaun stravauging through the

streets. Accordingly he cam', the sergeant cam'—for she woulna hear him ca'd a sodger—a fine muckle tall handsome-looking chiel' he was, I must say, and a grand talker. He had been to India, and to Ireland, and where not—and he could describe about everything ye wanted to ken; though whyles, when he was vaunting about the army and so on, I tel't him that sodgers were little better than big targets, dressed up in scarlet or blue, an' set upon a horse's back to jingle till they were knockit ower. He didna like it much, but he was eyan good-tempered, and he used aye to answer that the enemy were just the same. Then I would say back to him, 'Oh, we've naething ado wi' the enemy—it's *you* I'm speakin' to, an' at ony rate the enemy doesna want to take awa' my silly bit lassie there!' That was the way I keep't girdin' at him, in hopes to drive him off; no' forgettin' at a time, to make mention o' the young grocer, an' his success in life. But I couldna look at Jane's face without seein' how the case stood, an' some way or other they managed to make thei'sel's happy, in fact she said the sergeant likit me particular well. The warst o't was, that her father being throng wit' his business at the time, and no' in till late in the evenin', he saw but little o't, and thocht less. Wae am I to say this day, that I let the truth be blinkit frae him, for I was aye hopin' to hear o' the regiment bein' shifted.

"In fac', at last the orders cam', as I didna fail to hear; the dragoons had to be off to Aldershott, and glad was I to see his back turned. I did a' I could to separate them then; I keepit up the letters he wrote to her, and some she wrote to him, but it was found out, and they were addressed, or they were posted, other ways. I spoke to her, I'm sure my tongue was never off her; but she would not listen. Word cam' to me quietly, too, how young Sandy Stewart was arrived in Liverpool, and was settlin' his affairs to come hame in a week's time, wi' some grand ower-sea presents for his mother an' our Jane; and I said naething o't, thinkin' to tak' her by surprise. But that was less use than a', in fac' it wrought things to a head. How the sergeant got wind o't, I canna tell; but no' a day or twa before young Stewart wun hame, back comes my gentleman, and that very night Jane told me that he wanted her to marry him. I tell'd her, her father would never gi'e his consent, nor e'er forgi'e her if she did it anyway underhand; and this she kent very weel hersel'. She begged me to speak to him, but I wouldna meddle in it. 'Mother,' she says, and she clasped her twa hands thegither, 'I *must* hae him.' 'Awel, Jane, my woman,' I says, 'you'll rue it once, but that'll be a' your life. Ye'll break your father's heart, and bring his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.' That night she went out, and cam' back again about ten o'clock lookin' awfu' flushed and feverish, but she said naething mair, till the next morning she telled me that they had gone before a justice o' the peace, an' had got married.

"Oh, her father was an angry man that day, but I got him spoken ower at last. 'John,' I says, 'since the deed is done, it canna be helpit; the best thing now to do is to get the minister and ha'e them married

properly. It'll never do to let the neebors see she has done that without your leave; besides, ye ken, he can claim her by the law at any moment.' That frightened him to the extent, that at last, after a sore reissle, he gi'ed in, provided a' should be done duly and in order, according to the fear of God, and the sergeant bude to sign an agreement beforehand—being of the prelatical persuasion himsel'—if there was any family, to allow their upbringing under pure Presbyterian ordinances, and the shorter catechism was to be learned them. It would ha'e made the dourest heart wae to see the good-man when he threip't about this before me to the sergeant, like as it laid some ease to his mind, an' couldna be broken through i' the application; but the sergeant made no difficulty about it. Well, they were married—properly and beautifully married—and I sat up till day-break to get finished wi' the silk gown I bought her, a changing-coloured silk it was, and her father gave her a good kist-full, and I gave her routh o' sheets and blankets, hame-spun dapery, spun in my mother's time, no' like the common trash ye buy nowadays.

"Then they went to Newcastle, and a year after, I went there to be wi' her when her first baby was born; he had her two eyes, but ower like the father otherwise for my taste, though a bonny bairn. I visited her in different places, and was aye greatly attended to mysel', for the sergeant and his friends spared no trouble, nor they thought nae sicht or show ower good for me, I must say; though I aye withstood the temptation o' stage-playin', but I needna speak mair against it without experience. Awell, frae London the first time I was there, Jane cam' down wi' me hersel' and her two children, winsome wee things to ha'e by us in the house; and weel micht they draw round the good-man's heart as they did, hearin' them their questions and their bits o' paraphrases wi' his ain ears, till ye would ha'e said he was well-nigh contented about the sergeant. It was when she was with us this way, that the word cam' frae headquarters that the regiment was ordered for the Indies. Oh, she was white to see, puir young thing, when we heard it first. 'Mother,' says she, a' in a moment, 'I must go too—wherever my man goes, there must I and the bairns be.' 'Oh, Jane, Jane,' I said, 'if ye gang, I'll never see you more—something 'll befall ye in that wild country,' I said, for I felt it in me, 'or ye'll die and be bury't in the weary sea—Oh, Jane, stay wi' your mother like a good lassie!' I says to her. Naething I said could daunt her from it; she was bent upon going. Her father was worse against her going than he had been at her marriage; but what could he do? he had to gi'e way at the last, as before.

"Awell, she went away, and a dull dull house ye may believe they left behind them. We had letters from her at last; then after that, another baby was born to her in the Indies, and she wrote word how much she had missed me, for I had been with her at the rest; the fac' was, I couldna ha'e left the good-man his 'lane, or else, maybe, I would ha'e ventured ower the sea till her in time. She tel't us no little forbye about the places they were in, both the barracks at Dum-Dum as they

ca'd it, and the fort at Calcutta, wi' the black nurses she had, and servants like gentry at hame, and queer machines to carry them about on men's shoulders, and private quarters o' her own to bide in, for the sergeant got a Staff appointment, and meikle more she wrote to tell us; but aye her letters cam' ower the words in different pairts o' them, 'Oh, mother, if I could only see you again!' Aye, puir lassie, that will never be in this world—for the next letter brought news that my bonny Jane was *dead*."

The while she had been telling this little story, the good woman's voice was firm and distinct, without a quiver in it; now her clear eye was dimmed, the wrinkles deepened towards it, her lips contracted in pain upon the last bitter word. It was in different tones, like those of some other person, that she added slowly, nodding her head to each epithet: "And the sodger—Jane's man—the sairgeant—the great senseless taurget, as I weel might ca' him—no' nine months after, he was married again. And the bairns, my bonny Jane's three bairns, we dinna ken yet where they are. But we ha'e written to head-quarters, and just only let me hear o' the regiment being in England, an' if I had to traivel the road on fit, I'll gang to him and march them off hame to our ain house, and no person shall daur to hinder. If my puir misguided lassie had but ta'en my advice, she might ha'e been in the land o' the living at this day, and her father, my puir John, wouldna ha'e been the man he is. Is he ill, ye ask, mem? No, he's no' just ill—but he's been kind o' dotedways since the news cam'. The doctor says, just to keep him cheery, and we maun aye mind there's a sure world abune, and I do my best—— But losh me!" she cried, starting up as the coach entered the outskirts of Z—— "I had to get out near here, and this is the address written on a bit paper—the gude-man *would* put it down, like as I was a bairn, no' fit to take care o' mysel'! I tell'd him he should row me up in broon paper, and stick the addresses on my back, like ane o' his harness-pieces! Noo, I maun get out, laddie—I'm by the place, man!"

The boy stopped the coach, she heartily bid us both good-day, to which we cordially responded, while the worthy little dame was landed amidst the muddy road, needing no help this time, however, on her way. She mingled with the thoroughfare as we rolled on, and we saw her no more.

A Visit to the Suez Canal.

"ACTUM EST ! My holiday is over !" I exclaimed, as I turned my back on Raphael's St. Cecilia at Bologna, and set my face towards Rimini. But who enjoys a holiday like a returned Sahib after his long absence from home ? The invigorating air of England seems to respond to his slightest movement, and breathe around him as it were a strange, delicious music. As for me, like a careful epicure resolved to sip enjoyment to the dregs, I had turned away from the Paradise of home to look in on the pleasant wickedness of Homburg, and had crossed the rushing Rhine at Basle before I remembered that the dawn of "Black Monday" was already reddening for me in the expectant East. Lausanne, musically named Lausanne, and "glorious Milan" were still before me. But these were fast-fleeting pleasures. Bologna, Rimini, Ancona, rapidly succeeded each other, and passed away like passing thoughts. At Brindisi, than which a more heaven-forsaken hole is nowhere to be found, the light had vanished altogether from my face ; but as I stepped on board the Italian steamer bound for Alexandria, the purpose I had formed to make a supplementary holiday of the trip through Egypt, and visit the works in progress through Suez and Port Saeed, threw a last ray of sunshine over my departing joys. Black Monday need not be so black after all.

Nevertheless, if I could have forgotten for a moment that my route lay "Eastward Ho !" the crowded deck of the steamer would very speedily have reminded me of the hard matter-of-fact. The majority of the passengers were returning to a land from which they had fled about four months previously in abject dread of the Cholera. Here was the whole Alexandrine world submitted to my observation in a microcosm. Such a Babel of languages, such a miscellany of nationalities—cigarette-smoking women of bilious complexion and portentous obesity, and fez-capped men, whose one hope was cotton, and whose one fear cholera, might be studied to advantage elsewhere in the Levant ; but nowhere would the individual characteristics be found more strikingly marked. Would I could sketch them with the felicity of Dumas, if it is to him we are indebted for the fancy that a modern Turk in tight frock-coat and fez resembles nothing so much as a bottle of old port, red-sealed !

Pacing the deck among these motley groups, as the vessel glides over the smooth and shining Adriatic, one is tempted to speculate on the construction of an exact scale of knavery which should teach how many Jews equal one Armenian, how many Armenians one Maltese, how many Maltese one Greek. Alexandria is the witches'-cauldron in which all these congenial elements seeth and fuse. A handful of Russians, some

Germans and English, many French and more Italians, are the ingredients added by commerce; Constantinople throws in a few Turkish officials, and finally Africa herself supplies the demands of physical labour in the persons of handsome brown Arabs, "with legs" (as Lady Duff Gordon says) "like John of Bolegna's Mercury,"—swarthy Nubians grinning from ear to ear,—and Copts with features and complexion which exactly reproduce their blue-tinted progenitors on the mummy-cases in the British Museum. Madame Olympe Audouard, who should be an authority on the subject, characterizes the Greek and Italian merchants as vulgar and insolent, "*sans pareils*," and for a certain knot of the same races she can scarcely find language sufficiently strong—"sans foi, ni loi, voleurs et assassins, qui sont une des plaies d'Egypte. Ces Grecs, ces Italiens, se donnent des coups de couteau, se tirent des coups de revolver, très facilement et très fréquemment. 'Ils se tuent entre eux,' dit-on; 'tant mieux ! c'en est de moins.'" Still one must not be ungrateful. The fresh dates of Alexandria deserve some acknowledgment, and the polished rose-red column, miscalled Pompey's Pillar, worthily marks the site of a temple which rivalled in magnificence the Capitol of Rome. For the rest, indeed, the glorious city, whose foundation was foreshadowed by Homer, is no more as she has been. The palaces of Cleopatra have given place to the casinos, the *cafés-chantants*, and the gaming-hells of the Levantine. The schools of the dreamy Neo-Platonists have been succeeded by the counting-houses of too practical speculators; and on the whole it is a relief to exchange the tantalizing memories and the sordid realities of such a place for the still living romance of Cairo.

Cairo, as every one knows, is still essentially Oriental in appearance; more so than Benares, much more so than modern Lucknow. "See Naples and die," says the Italian proverb; but it is good, also, to look down on Cairo from its citadel, and live. That citadel was built by Saladin. The sumptuous mosque of Oriental alabaster through which you pass, is the burial-place of the victorious Mahomed Ali. You emerge upon the ramparts from which the last of the Mamelukes leapt for life, and won. And there you pause. The confused murmur of a great city lying far below surges up to you from a brown wilderness of building, pierced everywhere by countless minarets, and enframed in such peerless setting as only the flooded Nile and the everlasting Pyramids can give. Round the whole horizon stretches a placid labyrinth of water, among clustering islands of emerald verdure, where broad sails hover like white-winged birds, and the columnar date-palm floats double, palm and shadow. Beyond the Nile, and on the edge of the Libyan desert, behold the Pyramids! There they stand in the grey fervour of an Egyptian noon, austere and solitary within the sphere of their own religiousness. So stood they, already some centuries old, when the Chaldean sheikh Abram, with his too-beautiful Sarai, was driven by famine into the land of Egypt.

Of course I visited the Pyramids, and, as usual, the Arab ciceroni

did their best to destroy whatever enthusiasm the visit might have inspired. An imitation of three English cheers rang out from the gang of mendicants as I set my foot on the summit of the Great Pyramid; and the sound had scarcely died away when one of them struck up "Yankee Doodle," and a second, to make sure of my nationality, pointed out Napoleon's battle-field, and declaimed with effusion, "Soldats, quarante siècles vous regardent." In spite of this, one essays to look round with some little remaining impression of awe, and behold—Jenny Lind's name cut on the topmost stone by her servant! It is impossible not to laugh and light a cigar, though below you lies the Sphinx of Sphinxes, couchant among ten thousand sepulchres, and beside you rise other pyramids, where the kings of Memphis "lie in glory, every one in his own house."

I found simpler pleasure, before leaving Cairo to carry out my original purpose, at Heliopolis, the Aon or On of Ezekiel, and the Bethshemesh of Jeremiah. The low mounds of earth, with the fields and gardens comprised within their limits, look insignificant enough. Yet this is the undoubted site of the great Temple of the Sun, the high-priest of which was father-in-law to Joseph, and in later times the teacher of Moses. A long avenue of sphinxes which led up to the front of the temple, terminated in two obelisks with gilded apices—the gift, thirty-eight centuries ago, of Osirtasen the First, the prototype of the legendary Sesostris. One of these obelisks is still erect in its proper place. "It is the oldest known in Egypt, and therefore in the world—the father of all that have arisen since. It was raised about a century before the coming of Joseph; it has looked down on his marriage with Asenath; it has seen the growth of Moses; it is mentioned by Herodotus; Plato sat under its shadow. Of all the obelisks which sprung up around it, it alone has kept its first position. One by one, it has seen its sons and brothers depart to great destinies elsewhere. From these gardens came the obelisks of the Lateran, of the Vatican, and of the Porta del Popolo; and this venerable pillar (for so it looks from a distance) is now almost the only landmark of the great seat of the wisdom of Egypt."

Nor are these the only memories connected with the obelisk. Where the Indian corn now rustles round its base, once bloomed a garden of balsam, planted by Cleopatra. Never before her time had the Balm of Gilead passed out of Judæa; but if the "Serpent of old Nile" conceived a fancy, who was Herod that he should say her nay? Afterwards these plants travelled southwards into Arabia, and thus the whim of Antony's mistress still lives in the modern Balsam of Mecca. Even the lurid halo conferred by modern war is not wanting to complete the dignity of Heliopolis. Sixty-five years ago these mounds and fields were ringing with the din of battle: Ottoman horsemen dashing desperately upon the squares of France, and Kleber's grenadiers charging for the last victory their doomed general was destined to share.

While at Cairo, I amused myself, and was at the same time better prepared to understand what I should see of M. de Lesseps' undertaking,

by inquiring what history had to say concerning any similar attempt to unite the two seas in past ages. The idea of connecting the waters of the Red Sea with those of the Mediterranean is by no means a novelty. It suggested itself even more naturally to the despots of ancient times than to modern engineers. So long as the Cape of Good Hope remained undiscovered, the gold, ivory, apes, and peacocks of the Indian and Arabian trade had hardly any other route to the more northern centres of civilization than up the Red Sea. At first sight, however, an important difference is noticeable between the plan of M. de Lesseps and that of the Pharaohs and Ptolemies of old. The latter connected the Red Sea with the Pelusiac or Bubastic—that is, the most eastern—branch of the Nile, making that river their passage for the rest of the way to the Mediterranean; the modern canal is to span the isthmus in a direct line of its own, from one sea to the other. The ancient canal was known as the Canal of Hero; it is also sometimes called the Canal of Arsinoe. But the credit of its execution is due to Rameses the Second, the same monarch whose achievements under the name of Sesostris have made that name so renowned. Its origin, therefore, dates 1,300 years before the Christian era. The point at which it started from the Nile varied under the different works of restoration effected by succeeding princes, but the area of variation seems not to have extended beyond Bubastis to the north, and Belbays, 12 miles further south. From the neighbourhood of Bubastis thus defined, the water flowed nearly due east for 35 miles, and then curving southward, ran by the Bitter Lakes to the Red Sea. It is said to have been 100 feet broad by 40 deep, and probably it met the sea further north than could now be the case, the land about Suez having considerably risen since the days of the Pharaohs. After a lapse of seven centuries, during which neglect and the sandy nature of the soil had brought destruction to the channel, Pharaoh Necho set himself to repair the work of his great predecessor. One and twenty thousand men, according to Herodotus, perished in making the excavation, and at length the attempt was abandoned, because an oracle had warned the king that he was “labouring for the barbarian.” In 525 B.C., when Egypt became a satrapy of Persia, Darius completed what Necho had begun; and on the “Suez stone” near the embouchure of the canal, there is to be seen an inscription in the Persian cuneiform character, which reads—“Darius the Great King.” About 250 B.C., Ptolemy Philadelphus re-opened and improved the bed, and the Canal of Arsinoe derives its title from his sister, in whose honour he founded a town near the modern Suez. The work of Ptolemy appears to have been maintained till the commencement of our era, for Cleopatra, after the battle of Actium, talked of transporting her galleys to the Red Sea, and flying southwards with her Roman lover, to unknown lands beyond the power of their conqueror. After this the canal suffered from a long period of neglect, until, in the seventh century, the Caliph Omar won for himself and his successors the proud title of Ameer el Momeneen, Prince of the Faithful, by once more making the waters flow in their accustomed

course, and so sending timely supplies of corn to the holy cities of Arabia. How long the passage remained open after Omar, is doubtful; for on the one hand, the same caliph who founded Bagdad is said to have purposely stopped the channel for political reasons, and, on the other, there is a story that English pilgrims sailed down it in the ninth century on their way to the Holy Land. When M. de Lesseps commenced operations, the only portion of the old work that remained practicable—and that solely for purposes of irrigation—was a length of some twenty-six miles at its commencement near Bubastis. This was called the El Wadee Canal, or Canal of the Valley; and it served to water the land round Tel-el-Kabeer, which is now known as the Wadee Estate (*Domaine de l'Ouady*). All the rest of its course was found to be choked with sand; nevertheless, at intervals, and especially between the Bitter Lakes and Suez, it was not difficult to trace vestiges of the ancient bed.

The modern French scheme embraces the following constructions:—

1. A maritime canal, 100 miles long, 189 feet broad, and 26 feet deep, from Port Saed on the Mediterranean direct to Suez on the Red Sea.

2. A sweet-water canal, about 60 feet broad by 8 feet deep, which, starting from Zagazig on the Moës Canal, flows eastward to Lake Timsah, and there meets the maritime canal at a right angle half-way across the Isthmus. It then bends southward and runs in a parallel line with the maritime canal to Suez. Zagazig being close to Bubastis, and the Moës Canal almost identical with the old Tanitic branch of the Nile, this sweet-water canal is in fact little more than a reproduction of the ancient canal of the Pharaohs.

3. Another sweet-water canal, which is to be an essential feeder of the principal channel by bringing to it, at a point some 10 miles east of Zagazig, the waters of the Nile taken from the main stream near Cairo above the apex of the Delta. This channel is to be made entirely at the cost and under the direction of the Egyptian Government. It was begun a year ago on the very system of forced labour which the Pasha had withdrawn from the French, but was suspended in consequence of the cholera breaking out when but little progress had been made. The works have since been resumed, but I shall not find it necessary to say anything more concerning this supplementary channel.

The present state of the French works may be roughly summarised as follows:—The sweet-water canal is finished from Zagazig to Timsah, and thence to Suez. The great maritime canal is open, not in its full breadth or depth, but in a thin and shallow trench, known as the *Rigole*, from its terminus on the Mediterranean to its half-way station, Ismailia, on Lake Timsah, where it meets the sweet-water canal. By using, therefore, the maritime rigole at the northern end of the line, and the sweet-water canal at the southern, it is possible now to pass from one sea to the other, at least in one of the country boats. And this is the feat which, when first performed last August, brought telegraphic congratulations from the French Emperor to M. de Lesseps, perplexed the English press,

and roused in the rest of Europe a feeling of which the German *Kladderadatsch* was perhaps the best exponent, when it delineated M. de Lesseps triumphantly dragging a tiny boat from between the legs of John Bull, who vainly bestrides the new junction of the seas like a Colossus foiled and furious !

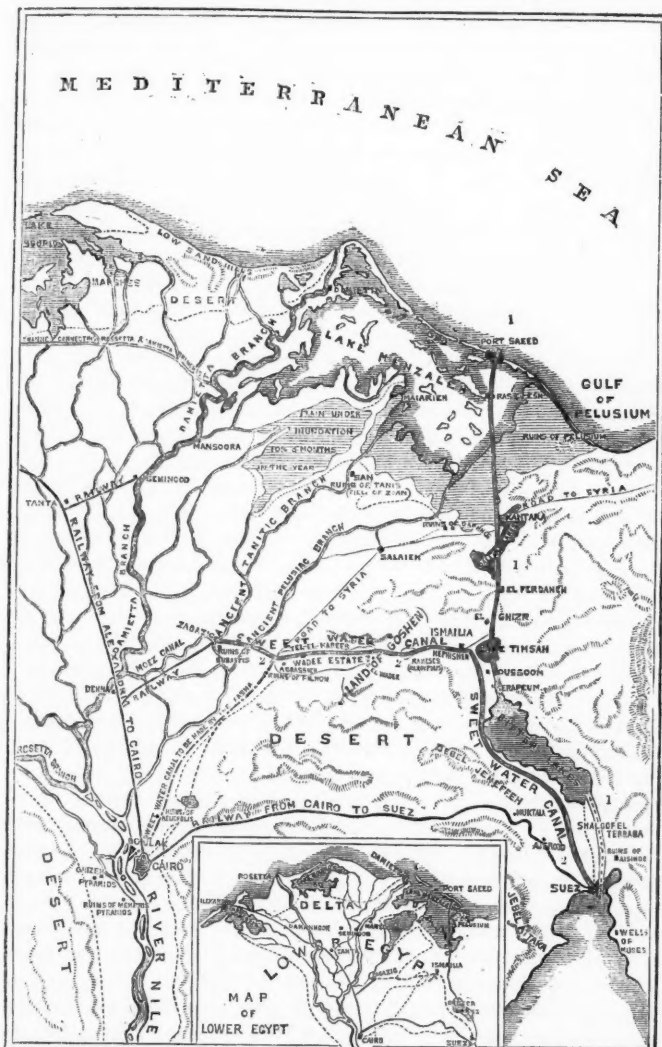
I will now describe, as intelligibly as possible, what I saw of the works—premising that I had brought to Cairo a letter of introduction from the India Office, and was not a little disappointed to find that the gentleman to whom it was addressed had started for Constantinople the day before my arrival at Cairo. Under these circumstances, I went direct to the office of the Canal Company, and threw myself on the courtesy of the agent. Signor Vernoni proved to be a gentleman of Scotch origin, whose family had long been domiciled in Italy, but he still bore the arms and well-known motto of the Vernons. Nothing could exceed his civility. I had only to explain who I was, and what I wanted, to be furnished with a letter which removed all difficulty, and next morning I started on my expedition, accompanied by a young Englishman, with whom the fortune of travel had made me acquainted. I was sorry to leave Cairo. In the Consul-General's hospitable rooms I had met a famous Eastern traveller, whose conversation was as charming as his deeds had been adventurous, and the evenings at Shepherd's Hotel were truly "*noctes cœnæque delit.*"

The train which runs from Cairo to Alexandria set us down at Benha-el-Assal, a town near the entrance of the Moës Canal, from which point a branch line took us eastward to Zagazig, skirting the south bank of the Moës. Nearly the whole distance a continuous line of trees, topped at intervals by a white sail or the trailing smoke of a steamer, renders the noble work of the founder of Cairo easily discernible along the whole line. Field after field of the most luxuriant cultivation attests the justice with which this ancient cutting has been styled the Golden Canal ; and the nearer view, obtained at Zagazig, of a stream 150 feet broad, studded with islets, and navigable all the year for large boats, gives the impression rather of a river than of a canal.

Zagazig, where the sweet-water canal begins, is a dirty town, said to contain 30,000 inhabitants. Its rise is due less to the French Canal Company, which is here content to be slenderly represented, than to the world-wide influence of the American war. The value of the cotton brought through the place during the last year, for shipment at Alexandria, has been estimated at 1,800,000*l.* And to facilitate the transit of this enormous production, two new railways are soon to be opened—one direct to Cairo, and the other to Mansoorah, on the Damietta branch of the Nile. But successful places, like successful people, are not always the most agreeable, and the neighbourhood of Zagazig has metal more attractive than its internal squalor. We were bent on visiting the ruins of Bubastis.

Neither horses nor donkeys being procurable, we started across country on foot. There stretched a green sheet of Indian corn and yellow-flowering cotton between us and the dun-coloured mounds of Tel Bast, and twice

SKETCH MAP OF THE ISTHMUS OF SUEZ.



- 1, 1, 1. The intended Maritime Canal direct from Port Saeed to Suez, part of its course, from Port Saeed to Lake Timsah, now opened to the navigation of small vessels, by means of a shallow rigole.
- 2, 2, 2. The Sweet-water Canal finished along its whole course.

we were turned back by coming suddenly upon one of the numerous water-courses which intersect the black soil in every direction.

A vast expanse of desolation, enclosed within a clearly defined circuit of lofty mounds, is all that remains of Bubastis. Knee-deep in powdery dust we climbed the shapeless hillocks that once were the outer ramparts of the city. Piles of crumbling earth, many of them covered almost as thickly with broken pottery as Monte Testaccio at Rome, lay confusedly heaped together, or separated by chasms of the most varied depth and steepness. Yet in the midst of this chaos it was possible here and there to discern the partial configuration of a street, and everywhere successive layers imprinted on the more upright masses of mould showed that the house walls had been built of the same crude brick which the Israelites found so difficult to manufacture out of Nile mud, without the usual mixture of chopped straw. Elsewhere time and the elements may have worked their will in vitrifying or petrifying, but here they have pulverised all the works of man. Deep in dusty death lies the metropolis which gave Solomon his haughtiest bride; where stood the palace which gave refuge to the infant Hadad, the last of his race, when Joab smote every male in Edom; and where Jeroboam fled for shelter after the dangerous distinction conferred on him by Ahijah's prophecy. Not a living thing is now to be seen within the area from which Shishak issued forth, "with twelve hundred chariots and three-score thousand horsemen," to capture Jerusalem, and to spoil the Holy Temple of its golden shields. The ground on which we stand has been trodden by Herodotus, and the description he has left of the city is even now the best guide to its ruins. The glory of Bubastis centred in the temple and oracle of Pasht, with the "cat's head," a goddess whose attributes to some extent correspond with those of Diana. "The temple," says Herodotus, "stands in the middle of the city, and is visible on all sides as one walks round it, for, as the city has been raised up by embankment, while the temple has been left untouched in its original condition, you look down upon it wheresoever you are." And, just as Herodotus has said, we found ourselves looking down on a broad open space, which at the first glance proclaims itself as the site of the temple. A few gigantic fragments of sculptured granite strewn about the centre still testify to the magnificence that has passed away, and to the enormous force by which they were overthrown. The entire face of a granite obelisk in this area was found by the French expedition to be sculptured with stars; portions of a massive cornice and other huge fragments sculptured with strange hieroglyphs, were among the débris which have doubtless yielded valuable material for the history of Egyptian architecture. "Other temples may have been grander, and may have cost more in the building, but there was none so pleasant to the eye" of the artistic and travelled Greek "as this of Bubastis." And certainly it is difficult to imagine anything more beautiful than the picture he draws of a central shrine, towering in holy isolation above two broad rings of sheeny water, and an intermediate arcade of umbrageous trees.

Hither annually, when Pasht held her great festival, flocked myriads of pilgrims from the uttermost parts of Egypt. The old Greek estimated the number at 700,000, without counting children. Dropping down the Nile in large companies, they revelled all the way to Bubastis, the men piping and drinking, and the women now frolicking to the clatter of their own castanets, and now, as they sank on voluptuous cushions, singing songs soft, low, and sleepy as that of Pelagia—

Loose the sail, rest the oar, float away down,
Fleeting and gliding by tower and town;
Life is so short at best! Snatch, while thou canst, thy rest,
Sleeping by me!

And on reaching their destination, it was a religious duty to give themselves up to the wildest orgies. For the goddess of "the gay Bubastian grove," however much she might resemble Diana in other respects, was in truth not

Our Dian of the North, who chains
In vestal ice the current of young veins.

On returning to Zagazig, we found shelter at a small tavern called the "Hôtel des Français," and as evening fell, we commenced our voyage down the sweet-water canal. It has been explained above that the general direction of this canal is the same as that of the old canal of the Pharaohs, from which the ancient Tanitic branch of the Nile was continued through Lake Menzaleh to the sea. It now remains to be added that from Zagazig to Ras el Wadee the Company actually make use of the ancient bed of the Moës Canal, and to that extent realize the dream of the French savans who accompanied the first Napoleon to Egypt.

Ras el Wadee is at the eastern end of an oasis, called the Wadee Estate, which comprises by far the most profitable portion of M. de Lesseps' undertaking, and in this respect again does honour to the foresight of the old expedition.* This estate contains nearly 120,000 acres of excellent land, and is the absolute property of the Company, having been purchased by them from the late Viceroy for 84,000*l.* on some occasion when Saeed Pasha wanted money to distribute in largesses at Constantinople. Within fifteen months after the completion of the purchase, the area of cultivation had risen from 12,000 to 14,500 acres, and the amount realized from cotton alone, not to mention the value of the cereals, rose to 120,000*l.* Simultaneously the original population of 5,000 had been nearly doubled, and of the new cultivators 3,000 were wild Bedouins, whom the fair terms and good faith of European civilization had power to beguile from their world-old ways of wandering pillage in the desert. The chief place on the domain is Tel el Kabeer, where the wants of the Company's servants and tenants are sufficiently supplied by an hotel, three schools, and a handsome mosque. The town can also

* See *Projet d'un Etablissement d'Agriculture en Egypte*, lu à l'Institut le 16 Vendémiaire, an 7.

boast of fine gardens, where among the orange, the plantain, the pomegranate and the rose of former owners, the French have lately planted the mulberry also, with a view to the breeding of silk-worms.

Silently, under the splendour of a full moon, we glided all night through the Land of Goshen. Near Abbassieh we passed the ruins of Pithom, and about four hours afterwards those of Rameses, the two ancient treasure-cities which the Israelites built for Pharaoh. It was from Rameses that the Israelites began their march under Moses towards the Promised Land ; and consequently the line of the sweet-water canal from this point to Suez may serve to give some general indication of the path along which travelled the pillar of the cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night. The Arab name for the mounds of Rameses is Tel-el-Maskoota, but the Biblical designation has been revived by the French for the small station they have erected here.

Early in the morning we arrived at Ismailia, having previously passed on our right the sluice-gate at Nephisheh, through which the sweet-water canal branches south to Suez. Five years ago, Ismailia was simply part of the desert, and Lake Timsah, on which it stands, was dry. Ismailia is now a town of 5,000 inhabitants, and Timsah a broad sheet of water. The Director-General of the Works, and the Chief Engineer, with a numerous staff of officials, have their head-quarters at this central position ; and the house occupied by the former, M. Voisin, is a strikingly handsome and commodious building, situated in a garden, the trees and flowers of which, considering their age, are wonderful. A word, too, must be said for the *Hôtel des Voyageurs*. Its exterior would be no discredit to any European city, while its interior arrangements are not much worse than those of the principal hotels in Alexandria. After breakfast we were annoyed to find that our hopes of going on to Port Saeed by the maritime canal were likely to be disappointed, because the Egyptian Governor of the Isthmus was also journeying in the same direction, and required for himself and his attendants the whole of the boat usually available for the conveyance of first-class passengers. There seemed no alternative between losing a day at Ismailia, or journeying by a very slow boat, crowded with dirty Arabs. Clearly it was high time to try what Signor Vernoni's letter of introduction would do for us, and so I went with it to M. Voisin. That gentleman was courteous even to kindness, and through his intercession we obtained permission to proceed to Port Saeed with the Governor.

We embarked about four p.m., and this time in a larger and far more comfortable boat than that which had brought us from Zagazig. The Governor proved to be a stately old Turk, unable to speak any language but his own. After exchanging with us, through an interpreter, a few compliments of truly Oriental hyperbole, he smoked in silence. But there was also on board a pleasant French gentleman, a M. Thevenet, with whom we soon made friends: he was a Civil Engineer, who, in the pursuit of his profession, had seen much of Algeria and Central America, and he was then engaged in ascertaining, from personal inspection, what facilities

there might be for the general introduction of steamers upon the existing channels of both the sweet-water canal and the *rigole*.

As already observed, the sweet-water canal diverges southward to Suez at Nephishah, about two miles before reaching Ismailia. The channel by which it is continued beyond Ismailia one and a-half miles further east, to meet the maritime *rigole*, is called the *Canal de Service*. And by reason of the sweet-water canal lying nineteen feet above the level of the sea, that is, above the level of the *rigole*, any danger which the contact of sea-water might cause to the freshness of the sweet-water canal, has been easily obviated by the construction of a couple of locks on the *Canal de Service*. Passing through these locks, which are large, and exceedingly well built of stone brought from the quarries of Jebel Jeneffeh, we soon reached a desolate-looking mansion, built as a country residence by the Pasha, but already falling into disrepair before he has honoured it with a single visit. Here we debouched upon the narrow stream which for the present is all that appears of the great maritime canal. Nominally, the *rigole* is seventy-one feet broad at the surface of the water; but in some places it seems much less, and at others it expands to the full breadth of 189 feet. The depth throughout is insignificant, being barely six feet in any part of its course.

It was the salt wave of the Mediterranean up which we were now advancing, and on either side of us was the African desert. The tawny sand sparkled in the afternoon sun like gold-dust, and, to our left especially, it lay heaped—as the breath of the last stormy *khamseen* had left it—in billowing hillocks, or *dunes* of the most fantastic curvature. About sunset we arrived at El Ghizr. The French engineers have nowhere, except at Lake Menzaleh, greater difficulties to contend with than at this point. The high walls of sand, between which the *rigole* now ran like a slender thread, sufficiently showed how much there was yet to be done before the cutting could be completed in its proper depth and breadth. It was too dark, however, to distinguish anything but the gibbet-like outline of the excavating machines on the left bank; so, reserving an inspection of the works for our return voyage, we adjourned to dinner. Our own stock of comestibles was merely what the hotel at Ismailia had been able to supply, but M. Thevenet's hamper might have been turned out by Fortnum and Mason. He filled our plates with *pâté-de-foie-gras*, opened bottle after bottle of capital champagne, and was nearly inconsolable because he had forgotten to provide a finishing cup of coffee. Then the moon rose, and looked benignly down on us as we lay about the deck, smoking, laughing, and spinning travellers' yarns of many a "far-countrie." It was not till a late hour that we severally dropped off to couches where the mosquitoes had it all their own way.

At sunrise we woke to find that we had passed the station of Kantara, and were in the midst of Lake Menzaleh. Shortly afterwards we reached Ras-el-Esh, where we exchanged our boat towed by mules for a dandy little steamer. A fresh breeze danced over the surface of the lake. Large

fish were leaping in every ripple, and dense flights of water-fowl rustled in all directions through the air. At the same time there was something strange and almost uncanny in the sight of the sea-like waste of water up which we were sweeping, and the arrowy precision with which the thin line of low embankment on either side laid out the track before us, like the ropes of a racecourse, far as eye could reach. How strange to reflect that this waste of waters was once kept under control by the rulers of Egypt, and that the track marked out by French engineers may be but a dim foreshadowing of the future, when the ancient channels and outlets may be restored, and the whole of that fertile soil recovered for the use of man!

As we approached Port Saeed about nine A.M., our senses were offended with all the sights and sounds of a busy manufactory—smoke in the air, and coal-dust on the towing-path, steam-engines hissing, waggons rolling, and the incessant clink-clank of hammered iron. Port Saeed is not merely a haven for the disembarkation of all the material and stores drawn from France; it also contains large and well-organized establishments necessary for the construction and repair of all the dredges and other machinery, the rolling-stock and the boats required along the whole line of the works.

Like Ismailia, Port Saeed is entirely a creation of the Company; and, just as Ismailia derives its name from Ismail Pasha, the present Viceroy, so Port Saeed does honour to the memory of Saeed Pasha, his predecessor. The town stands on the long ridge of sand which separates Lake Menzaleh from the sea; and the silt excavated at the mouth of the canal has been utilized to give width and elevation to a site which, in its natural condition, was barely 100 yards broad and 5 feet above the level of the sea. The canal, on reaching Port Saeed from the south, is intended to expand into a large inland harbour in the middle of the town, and then resuming its normal breadth to pass out to the Mediterranean between the stone walls of two long piers. Eventually, therefore, the town is to be bisected by the canal, but at present all that exists of Port Saeed lies, with the exception of a few warehouses, on the western bank. Its further development depends altogether upon the completion of the two piers, or at any rate of the western pier. The necessity for piers arises from the fact of there being a bar of sand along the whole coast, and this bar is so broad that the length which the walls for the protection of the cavity of the canal will have to extend before they reach the required depth of 26 feet has been estimated at from 2 to 3 miles. The western pier is the more important because there is a strong current uniformly setting down the coast from west to east. When that is finished, the very important object will have been gained of securing a shelter behind which vessels will be able to unload, dredges to work and double-bottomed lighters, laden with rubbish from the excavations inland, to get out to sea, and there dispose of their burden. Less progress has been made with the western pier than might have been expected, considering it was begun six years ago. The mode of construction first adopted was that of driving wooden piles into

the sand, fastening transverse beams to the piles, and finally filling up the timber-crate so formed with blocks of rough unhewn stone, brought from the village of Maks, near Alexandria. But the stones arrived in small quantities and at long intervals, while the injurious results of delay became daily more apparent. Accordingly a new plan had to be adopted. Iron piles were now sunk in sixteen feet of water, in the direction to be taken by the jetty, and upon them was built a platform intended to admit of vessels coming alongside and discharging cargo. It then remained to fill up with sunken stones the interval of 1,300 yards between the artificial island and the broken beginning of the pier; and this was the work we found going on at the time of our visit. The stones employed, however, were no longer the rough produce of the Maks quarry, but enormous cubical blocks of artificial stone, similar to those which have been used in the building of the quay in Dover harbour. They are manufactured by M. Dussaud on the spot, the elements of their composition being sea-sand and hydraulic lime. The junction with the island will be effected, probably, this spring, but even then the western pier will be finished in only about three-fifths of its full length. The eastern pier has not yet been commenced.

The future position of the inland harbour is marked out, and from the south-western angle of the nascent basin a branch-canal runs about a mile into Lake Menzaleh. This is called the Canal of Sheikh Karpootee, and it is intended to serve the double object of keeping Port Saeed in direct communication with Damietta, and of producing a current favourable to the maintenance of deep water in the harbour and at the mouth of the main canal. We noticed some five-and-twenty square-rigged vessels in the roadstead. The shipping which entered Port Saeed in 1864 is rated at 59,000 tons, spread over 467 vessels—a traffic exceeding that of Damietta and Rosetta combined. These figures of course prove only the utility of Port Saeed to the Canal Company, for although, since the junction of the rigole with the sweet-water canal at Ismailia, some small ventures of private enterprise have passed by water between Port Saeed and Suez, it cannot be said that Port Saeed has any appreciable traffic apart from the operations of the Company. I may here remark as an important fact in estimating the progress made by the Company, and the precedence given to certain works, that Port Saeed and all the stations on the rigole between it and Ismailia depend for their supply of fresh water entirely upon the sweet-water canal: the precious liquid is pumped to them from Ismailia through earthenware pipes, which run up the western bank of the rigole. There is also complete telegraphic communication along the whole line both of the rigole and of the sweet-water canal. We found very fair accommodation at the rather primitive establishment which does duty as hotel at Port Saeed, and whatever little defects might have been noticed were certainly not attributable to any want of goodwill on the part of our pleasant French landlady, or her really beautiful daughter.

In the afternoon, having said good-by to the hospitable M. Thevenet, we set out on our return. Our plan was to float down the rigole as far as El Ghizr, disembark there to see the works in progress, and then ride across the desert to Ismailia. The length of the rigole from Port Saeed to the Viceroy's villa near Ismailia, where it meets the *Canal de Service* from the sweet-water canal, is 46 miles, and this distance may, for engineering purposes, be divided into three portions, each of which has geographical features peculiar to itself. The first portion embraces the 24 miles of Lake Menzaleh; the second is 14 miles long, and derives its characteristic appearance from the Ballah Lakes; the third covers the remaining 8 miles, and contains the plateau of El Ghizr. A few words of description will serve to show the peculiar nature of the difficulties to be overcome in each part of the route.

Lake Menzaleh is the product partly of numerous canals from the Nile, and partly of the salt water flowing into it from the Mediterranean through four openings in the same narrow strip of land on which Port Saeed has been founded. These four openings were once so many distinct mouths of the Nile, and what is now a barren lagoon was formerly, as the reader has already been informed, a fertile plain, under cultivation in all its breadth, from Damietta to Pelusium. The soil here is a mixture of Nile mud and Mediterranean sand. It hardens by exposure to the sun, but in water decomposes into minute particles, which are caught up and carried away by the slightest ripple. The banks built of this treacherous substance are no sooner made than they begin to melt away under their own weight. Even at their best they quake under the tread of a camel, as if they rested on water. The channel they at present have to protect is only six feet deep; it is not easy, therefore, to prognosticate how they will be made to bear the increased pressure, both external and internal, sure to follow upon the canal being enlarged to its full dimensions. If all other means fail, M. de Lesseps is said to be prepared to accept the costly conclusion of sinking block after block of artificial stone, until a sound bottom for both banks is somehow found or made in the quagmire. This, it may be, is only a question of time and cost; and remembering the difficulties eventually overcome by our own engineers at Chat Moss, there seems to be no reason for despairing of success. Throughout the region of Lake Menzaleh the Company's operations appeared to be advancing with rather exceptional vigour; and it is only fair to remark that if the works generally had a somewhat languishing appearance, considerable allowance must be made for the accident of our visit occurring at a time when everything in Egypt still bore traces of the recent visitation of cholera. There are few parts of Egypt where the disease could have showed itself with more paralyzing power than on the Isthmus. The labourers all fled, and in Ismailia alone there were sixty deaths in a single day. At the time of our visit, the number of working dredges scattered over the first 18 miles of the channel, including Port Saeed, was stated to be thirty-five, but this probably was an excessive estimate, and the

dredges are not all of the same size or power. The average monthly output of those originally employed was about 17,000 cubic feet for each dredge; but much better results have been obtained from several new machines recently imported from France. The silt they bring up is turned into a row of trucks, standing in a lighter; when the trucks are full, the lighter is towed under a steam-crane on the bank; and the trucks, lifted one after another by the crane, are made to empty out their contents on the other side of the embankment.

The second portion of the route may be passed over with a slight observation. The Ballah Lakes are a series of pools, deriving the salt water which they contain from their connection with Lake Menzaleh. The soil in this neighbourhood is sand and clay with large stratifications of sulphate of lime. Here the maritime canal exists in its full breadth, though in depth it is still only a rigole of five feet. This soil, of course, is not nearly so difficult to work.

At El Ghizr the difficulties are only second in importance to those of Lake Menzaleh. The lofty plateau of firm sand mixed with carbonate of lime which has here to be traversed, is eight miles long, and the total quantity of material, which from first to last will have to be excavated, has been estimated at 29,000,000 of cubic feet. The rigole as seen here seems not to have made much progress since it was first opened in November, 1862, with a breadth of 46 feet and a depth of 5 feet. It took only ten months to obtain this result, but then M. de Lesseps was working with 18,000 impressed Fellaheen, whereas for the last two years he has been obliged to fall back on machinery and free labour, which are found to be very expensive and inefficient substitutes. M. Couvreux, the contractor, who has undertaken to finish this portion of the canal by October, 1867, has brought to bear on so much of his task as lies above water, an ingenious apparatus, but as we arrived on a Sunday we had not the advantage of seeing the machine actually at work. In appearance it resembled a dredge made to work from the edge of the bank instead of in mid-stream, and its buckets, instead of groping for a semi-liquid substance under water, scrape themselves full of dry sand along the slope of the bank. Steam-power moves the machine on rails from place to place along the bank, and a zigzag continuation of the railway through four or five successive levels provides for a constant flow of empty trucks going down to the dredge to be filled, and full trucks travelling upwards to shoot their sand beyond the outer face of the embankment. The strength of the machines now at work is nominally estimated at 12 dredges served by 600 trucks.

In this neighbourhood is a small branch canal running eastward, the object of which is to provide carriage for the stone found in the adjacent hills. The rigole here seems to mark out the eastern border of the future canal, as the excavations in progress are all on the western side. The station also is on the western side. The town is much smaller than Ismailia or Port Saeed; its inhabitants being merely the engineers,

mechanics, and labourers employed on the cutting, together with the few traders who supply their modest wants. The usual mosque and church, however, are not wanting, and the pretensions to elegance which we had already noticed about so many of the French houses on the Isthmus—even about those professedly of a rough and temporary character—were hardly less apparent here. For instance, the little tavern, where we obtained a cup of indifferent coffee, had the rustic pillars of its verandah festooned with some creeping plant, the foliage of which, contrasted with the barren brown sand all round, was singularly refreshing to the eye.

From El Ghizr we took donkeys to Ismailia. The distance is short, but there is no road between the two stations, only a track through the desert, marked at intervals by the carcase or skeleton of a camel that has fallen by the way. On arriving here, we were glad to rest a day at the *Hôtel des Voyageurs*, looking idly across the waters of Lake Timsah to the soft blue outline of the hills of Suez on the southern horizon. The maritime canal will pass through Lake Timsah, and the basin of the lake is intended to be a grand inland harbour; but nothing has yet been done towards this end beyond filling the formerly dry basin with water five feet deep, obtained partly from the salt rigole, and partly by branches from the sweet-water canal. In fact, south of Ismailia, the maritime canal is as yet unborn. Even in the form of rigole, it exists only at the three unconnected points of Toossoom, Serapeum, and Shalcof-el-Terraba. People, therefore, who, as a young Russian lately did, go to look for the Suez Canal at Suez, will find there not a trace even of its commencement. M. de Lesseps considered, not without reason, that the first thing to be done was to establish water communication of some kind between his base of operations on the Mediterranean and the centre of the Isthmus: all his efforts have therefore been concentrated on the northern portion of the line, while the remainder is comparatively untouched.

The tract over which the southern portion of the canal will be carried is a breadth of 54 miles, which, from a geographical point of view, may be divided into four sections;—first, that of Lake Timsah, stretching southward for 13 miles from the Viceroy's villa near Ismailia; next, that of the Bitter Lakes, 21 miles long; next, the 10 miles about Shalcof-el-Terraba; and lastly, the region near Suez, which takes up the remaining 10 miles, and is washed over by the waves of the Red Sea.

In the Timsah section, and immediately south of the lake, there is the small station of Toossoom, so called in honour of a son of the late Viceroy. Here for a distance of 4 miles, the rigole reappears, and though the depth is only 5 or 6 feet, it spans the full breadth of the future canal, as at the Ballah Lakes. Like the channel there, and the cutting through El Ghizr, this fine work is entirely the produce of the Arab spade and basket: and stands, in its comparative completeness, one more proof of the heavy blow and great discouragement which the Company has sustained from the withdrawal of the forced labour supplied by the late Pasha. The soil of the Timsah section is a sand which, while dry, holds together well enough

at an angle of 60 or 65 degrees, but in contact with water crumbles away and admits of only a very slight slope. Besides Toosoom, this section also includes the station of Serapeum, a name which appears to indicate proximity to the site of the ancient Serapeon. The difficulty to be overcome at Serapeum, though slighter in degree, is of the same quality as that already described at El Ghizr—namely, a high plateau of firm sand. The excavations here in progress extend north and south of the station about a mile and a half both ways, and it is hoped that towards the north a junction may soon be effected with the rigole at Toosoom. Much, however, remains to be done before even this can be accomplished, from the peculiar character of the works at Serapeum; the cutting here has not reached a sufficient depth to be on a level with the bottom of the rigole.

The Bitter Lakes were once a part of the Red Sea. This most probably was their condition when the miraculous passage of the Red Sea occurred. But the prophecy of Isaiah, that "the tongue of the Egyptian sea" should be destroyed, has long since been fulfilled, and now, not only are the lakes severed from the Red Sea by the sand-bank of Shaloof-el-Terraba, but they have also lost all their water by evaporation, and are in fact lakes no longer, but merely the basins of extinct lakes. Where the water formerly existed, is now a thick sheet of the purest salt, sparkling and bristling in irregular undulations like a *mer-de-glace*. Below the salt there is sand resting on a stratum of clay. The maritime canal is to traverse the length of the Bitter Lakes, but no works have yet been begun in this vicinity, and the ground is still untouched all the way from Serapeum to Shaloof. The bed of the Bitter Lakes is 26 feet below the low-tide level of the Red Sea; it is probable, therefore, that the French will have no difficulty in filling the basins as soon as they can bring the water of the Red Sea across the barrier at Shaloof.

At the last-mentioned point—a ridge in which sand and shells from the Red Sea cover large masses of pure clay and a considerable quantity of limestone—faint traces of the future canal are again discernible. Two miles of shallow excavation have been accomplished, which, however, do not yet contain any water. The hardness of the limestone gives rise to much difficulty, and apparently it has been found necessary to resort to blasting operations on a large scale. While we were at Ismailia, 200 Piedmontese miners were daily expected to pass through, on their way to Shaloof, and 200 more were to follow in a fortnight. The last, or Suez section of the canal, comprises 10 miles of lagoon, visited daily by the high tide of the Red Sea. The principal feature of the section is an island, called Turtle Island, chiefly composed of very hard limestone. The canal is meant to cross this island. But, as I have above intimated, no commencement of the maritime canal is yet to be seen near Suez.

This being the present state of the works, there would manifestly have been a weary ride through the desert, with little to be gained from it, if we had attempted to follow the future course of the maritime canal southwards. We determined, therefore, to voyage from Ismailia to Suez

by the sweet-water canal, stopping by the way to visit the excavations at Serapeum; for from the middle of the Isthmus, where we now were, the two canals, it will be remembered, run in parallel lines to the Red Sea, and at Serapeum the distance by which they are separated is little more than a mile. We found that upon this portion of our journey the Company had not yet organized any regular service for travellers; but the matter was soon settled by our engaging a boat exclusively for our own use.

Opening the sluice-gate at Nephishch was a tedious business, and as we had started about noon, the sun meanwhile beat fiercely through our canvas roof. The gates once passed, however, and our southward course to Suez fairly commenced, the air became cooler, and the rest of the voyage proved delightful. Floating through the desert had still the charm of novelty. Our camels trotted briskly along the towing-path, their tall, ungainly outline traced sharply against the sky, and one of their riders crooning a monotonous ditty that was not without a slumbrous suitability to the scene. A thin fringe of lately planted tamarisk adorned either bank, but otherwise not a trace of vegetable life was to be seen for miles. It was a little excitement to meet, as we did twice, other travellers upon our silent highway, and there was even some amusement in practically testing at times the fact of our boatmen being as absolutely ignorant of any European language as we were of Arabic.

At four o'clock we sighted the few houses of Toosoom lying stranded in the desert on our left, and about an hour later we reached the spot at which we had arranged to disembark, in order to proceed on foot to Serapeum. Here we found a station in the same style as that of El Ghizr, but smaller. The *chef-de-station* hospitably entertained us in his garden with vermouth and cigarettes, and took pains to explain to us the nature of the works under his superintendence. They are certainly ingenious. The bed of the sweet-water canal, as I have mentioned before, is nineteen feet above the level of the sea, and, consequently, of the rigole. Advantage has been taken of this circumstance to make the preliminary excavations at Serapeum only of a sufficient depth to admit of their being filled from the neighbouring sweet-water canal by a channel cut for the purpose. When that is done dredges are to be introduced, and to their mechanical aid will be resigned the business of completing the excavations down to a depth corresponding with the level of the rigole. When that depth has been reached, the supply of water from the sweet-water canal will be cut off, and a union effected between the rigole at Toosoom and the bed prepared for its entrance at Serapeum. In the meantime the silt brought up by the dredges is to be shot into a number of artificial basins specially constructed on one side of the growing channel. At the present time some three miles of trench, into which water has been admitted, are ready for the application of the dredge, and several dredges are shortly expected from Port Saeed. But evidently our host would have preferred the manual labour of 15,000 *fellaheen* to any quantity of machinery. Just

now he has not more than 400 men at work, three-fourths of whom are Arabs and Syrians, and the remainder Europeans of all sorts, chiefly Greeks and Italians, with a very few French.

It was dark by the time we returned to our boat on the sweet-water canal; and when we awoke next morning we were near Suez. We had thus missed one or two points of interest which the sweet-water canal in its southern extension has to show. For instance, there are four unfinished locks at the distance respectively of 10, 26, 42, and 51 miles below Nephisheh, which are each to be built of a single mass of artificial stone. The material of the stone is mixed on the spot and beaten down by paviors' rammers until layer after layer may have hardened into a homogeneous mass. Near the thirty-third mile there is a small railway, say about a mile long, running in from the westward, and connecting the canal with the important stone-quarries of Jebel Jeneffeh. Lastly, four miles of the canal beginning from the forty-fifth mile were worthy of observation as being identical to that extent with the old canal of the Pharaohs: the French engineers found the bed made ready to their hands, and had simply to let in the water.

The town of Suez has much changed during the last few years. Formerly it was a petty collection of Arab hovels, which once a week used to be scared from its propriety by an irruption of noisy Englishmen on their way to or from India. And no other Europeans were ever seen. Now it is an important town, in which the French play quite as prominent a part as the English. Then there was no drinking-water except what was painfully fetched on camels' backs from the fountain of El Ghurkudeh on the other side of the Fords. Now the French canal has brought the Nile itself to Suez. In the harbour we found three steamers of the *Messageries Impériales* and but two of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, the former in size and power of speed looking at least the equals of the latter. By their side lay a transport of the Imperial Government, waiting to take French troops to Cochin China; for Saigon, be it understood, receives all its reinforcements through Egypt, while not even the crisis of the Indian mutiny has sufficed to tempt England's soldiery to the Overland route. The hotel at Suez is English, and so is the steam-machinery belonging to the Peninsular and Oriental Company, but these count as nothing when compared with the splendid dry dock now in course of construction by the Messageries Company, at an estimated cost of 320,000*l*. This dock, which will be ready for use next summer, is built of stone specially imported from France. Its dimensions (442 feet long by 91 broad, with 23 feet depth of water when the caisson-gates are opened,) will allow the largest ships, whether of war or of mercantile marine, to be admitted for repair. It is connected with the shore by a railway running along an artificial causeway nearly two miles long, and if, as appears likely, a landing-quay be added, ocean steamers will be enabled to disembark their passengers and goods without the present troublesome intervention of a smaller steamer. Thus perfectly equipped at one end of

the line, and preparing similar arrangements at Saigon, the Messageries Company seems anxious to create for France as strong an interest in Eastern waters as the Canal Company has already given her in the Isthmus of Suez. Neither has the Messageries Company been behind the other in endeavouring to obtain their ends by spoiling the Egyptian. The Pasha bears the whole expense of the docks and all the works connected with it, but the use of it for half the year is to be vested in the French Company.

And now what are the probabilities as to the ultimate success or failure of M. de Lesseps' great scheme?

The French Bourse replies that the Company's shares of 500 francs are still worth 430; and the last English newspaper I saw contains a brief telegraphic notice of a meeting of contented shareholders at Paris, and of an assurance then having been given by M. de Lesseps that the maritime canal should be definitively opened to ships of all dimensions by the middle of the year 1868. The popular voice in England condemns the author of the project as an adventurer, who will have swindled the shareholders out of their last *sou* long before the physical difficulties of the Isthmus can be overcome; but in Egypt, where probably M. de Lesseps is better known, he is everywhere recognized as a sincere enthusiast, absolutely above any suspicion of a grovelling motive. With regard to the natural difficulties of the soil, I would venture to suggest, if there is any value in the platitude which declares every engineering operation to be merely a question of time and money, that sufficient consideration has perhaps hardly been given in England to the extraordinary advantages with which the undertaking was commenced. The Egyptian Government subscribed for more than two millions sterling of the Company's stock. Whatever land might appear requisite for the execution of the canals was conceded to the Company, and, if such land belonged to the Egyptian Government, no compensation was to be asked for it. All uncultivated land which could be brought under cultivation by irrigation from the sweet-water canal was to belong to the Company, and for the first ten years of possession no rent whatever was to be paid. Then there was the large and annually increasing profit from the Wadec Estate near Bubastis. And finally, Saeed Pasha had pledged himself to keep the works constantly supplied with 20,000 impressed labourers, brought from all parts of Egypt and delivered free of any expense to the Company at Zagazig. This last item was perhaps the most valuable of all. Given an inexhaustible supply of labour, and impossibilities in Egypt cease to be impossibilities, as the Pyramids alone are enough to prove. It is the unforeseen withdrawal or endangerment of these essential concessions by the present Viceroy, Ismail Pasha, more than any original miscalculation of the magnitude of the task, which now threatens the Company with serious danger. In the perpetual rivalry between France and England of which Egypt is the scene, Saeed Pasha, the late Viceroy, declared himself unequivocally the partisan of France; his successor, Ismail Pasha, is said to devote himself with an unprejudiced impartiality to the

accumulation of money. Possibly, therefore, Ismail Pasha may have imagined that the fellaheen would be more profitably employed in covering his own vast private estates with cotton than in burrowing through a desert for the French. At any rate, he made no difficulty in yielding to the representations addressed to him by the Sublime Porte, and not only stopped the guaranteed supply of forced labour, but further signified his intention of resuming the whole of the land ceded by his predecessor. The Company energetically protested against this breach of contract, and strove hard to prove to the Pasha that the pressure put on him from Constantinople originated only in the silly malevolence of England, and that he would be playing the part of a political suicide if he allowed the Porte to interfere in a question so purely domestic. But Ismail Pasha refused to be convinced, and M. de Lesseps was obliged to content himself with a compromise, by which the whole dispute between the Viceroy and the Company was to be referred for arbitration to the Emperor, in virtue of whose award the Egyptian Government has to pay the Company a compensation of 3,360,000*l*. Ismail Pasha cannot directly evade his obligation to abide by this result; but it is one that he little expected, and the probability seems to be, that he will shelter himself behind the further mediation of the Turkish Government, which affects to consider the whole proceeding as beyond the competency of the Sultan's lieutenant. Here, evidently, are the materials of an imbroglio which may eventually lead to a conference between the Great Powers of Europe, and in that event, what consideration is likely to be given to the interests of a private company of shareholders?

In the meantime, England's mistrust of the cosmopolitan professions of that same Company has been M. de Lesseps' opportunity. Nothing has more helped him to keep up the flagging enthusiasm of patriotic shareholders than the carefully fostered belief that their purses are measured not merely against land and sea, but against the gratuitous animosity of perfidious Albion to boot. And yet the English objections can hardly be called groundless. It is the real, even if incorrect, belief of all our capitalists, engineers, and sailors, that the enormous cost of making and maintaining the canal, combined with the fact of the Red Sea not being navigable for sailing ships, will suffice to render the project, even if accomplished, a commercial failure, as completely ruinous to those concerned as was the grand Scotch expedition in the last century for the colonization of the Isthmus of Darien. While France, therefore, regards the canal as a glorious step in the general progress of humanity, England has no sympathy to spare for a bubble which she is daily expecting to see burst. Nor can our statesmen forget that this very canal figured prominently among the Napoleonic ideas, and that General Bonaparte was in actual occupation of the Isthmus when he wrote to the Directory, saying—"Whatever European Power holds Egypt permanently is, in the end, mistress of India." And it is no sufficient answer to such misgivings to appeal to the palpably peaceful

character of the works in progress. They still represent a French colony, the utility of which to the French Government, in case of war, would be in no degree lessened by the circumstance of its having been founded by private capital with perfectly innocent intentions. If ever again the terrific game of war is started between France and England, Egypt is foredoomed to be once more a battle-field; and this being so, it is but natural that England should see with dissatisfaction her rival snatching a point of vantage beforehand. At the same time there is a possibility that the value of the point may be over-rated. If peace lasts, as it probably will, until England shall have secured an alternative route to her Eastern possessions through Syria and the valley of the Euphrates, India may afford to laugh at the dictum of the first Bonaparte. And even under present circumstances, a French occupation of Egypt could have no more offensive power against India—so long as our naval supremacy remained intact in the Indian Ocean and at the mouth of the Red Sea—than it had in 1798. At the worst, the arm of England is not shortened since the days when Nelson and Abercrombie beat the troops of France hopelessly out of Egypt. And if there is a new danger added in the proximity of the Zouaves and Turcos of Algeria, there may be some consolation also in the thought that the contingent which India would now send up to the fight would be no more the poor 6,000 Sepoys led by Baird, but five times that number of Sikhs and Punjabees, men of the stuff that made Hardinge and Gough reel doubtfully in the shock of combat at Ferozeshuhur, and that Hope, Grant, and Napier have since carried triumphantly to Peking.

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Quò, Musa, tendis? What hast thou to do with European politics? There is no forgetting Black Monday now! The lights of Suez have faded away in darkness behind me, and the good ship is speeding southward under the shadow of Mount Sinai. It is just a decade ago since, one of a band of eager writers and cadets, I first paced this starlit deck, or gazed over the bulwark into this phosphorescent sea. Where are they all gone, those "old familiar faces?" The fate of some is written in the red battle-rolls of Delhi and Lucknow, and one, the best and brightest of them all, fills a lonely grave in the jungle. Yet is there a remnant left to give me greeting as soon as I step once more on the Indian strand, and meanwhile there is kindly fellowship to be read in many a worn countenance among those now grouped around me—soldiers returning to their regiments, and civilians to their districts, all of them growling out regrets for the dear country left behind them, and all in their secret hearts mingling with those regrets a proud anticipation of the work awaiting them in India.

One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by war and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield!

